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## Fields in Fields, or Infinite Space

Joshua Graham

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# Fields in Fields, or In.Finite space

A working thesis  
by Joshua Graham





The field is same-ness.

The field is repetition.

The field is neutralizing.

The field is continuous.

The field is opportunistic.

The field is different.



# Field

The field is more than just the absence of anything that is not the field. The field is an ideology that creates opportunities and relationships.

I contend that the Field is important and worth examining because it values the “Typical” as a means of generating the atypical, to borrow the term from Koolhaas. This condition of “typical-ness” can be criticized for its repetition or sameness, however it is only because of this repetition and sameness that differences, mistakes, slips can emerge!

Therefore, I will begin with fields. I will collect them. I will read about them. I will try to diagram them. I will rescale them. I will combine them. I will use images to make new fields; reimagine territories.

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+++++

this is a field of dots and plus signs

+++++

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+++

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# Fields Sources, working

## Architecture

*The Economist* - The Smithsons  
*Great Mosque at Cordoba*  
*Moriyama House* - SANAA  
*Experimental House* - George Nelson  
*No-Stop City* - Archizoom  
*Rio De Janeiro*  
*Robin Hood Gardens* - The Smithsons  
*Rowley Way* - Neave Brown

## Film

*Groundhog Day*  
*Memento*  
*Inception*

## Installations

*Infinity Rooms* - Yayoi Kusama  
*Lightning Field* - Walter de Maria  
*Parallel of Life and Art* - The Smithsons  
*Wavefield* - Maya Lin

## Natural

*Birch Forest*  
*Starlings Flock*

## Music / Performance

*4'33"* - John Cage  
*The Astral-Traveller* - Antigone  
*Electric Counterpoint-Fast (Movement 3)* - Steve Reich  
*Glassworks* - Philip Glass  
*Music for 18 Musicians* - Steve Reich

## Text

*Field Conditions* - Stan Allen  
*Gestalt Groups Revisited: A Phenomenological Approach*  
- Mark A. Fairfield  
*How to Recognize and Read Mat-Building*  
- Alison Smithson  
*Human Space* - H. F. Bollnow  
*Scenes in a Concrete Desert* - Sergio Lopez Pineiro  
*Typical Plan* - Rem Koolhaas



## Robin Hood Gardens

Alison and Peter Smithson

1966 - 1972

Photograph, Sandra Lousada

Architecture



## The Lightning Field

Walter De Maria

1975

Land Art

## Field of Fields

The field project begins with the collection of fields. The selection of these fields comes from an extensive research / collecting process which first finds what looks to be a field. This act has found a range of field conditions that expectedly, and unexpectedly, emerge from other disciplines and endeavours outside of the discipline of architecture.

Each included field is paired with another, such as Robin Hood Gardens and the Lightning Field, which positions two different circumstances in conversation with one another. In this context, both Robin Hood Gardens and the Lightning Field share a pursuit of place and escape, and both use repetition to generate an anonymous condition from which unexpected, organic singularities emerge. However these singularities are not radical in and of themselves, but rather by the context out of which they are seen. The play of children or the strike of lightning, an elevated singularity through the anonymity of the field.

The matrix is curated and yet it is accessible without perscription.









*"...in that it provides a place  
for the anonymous client...in  
that it wants to be universal,  
greater than our little state-  
related to a greater law."*

- The Charged Void (296)

The architecture does not explicitly define an expectation, rather it becomes a neutral background from which new interactions with space emerge.

# *“Isolation is the essence of Land Art”*

- Walter De Maria

The presence of the human is not important, and actually detracts from the project, which is why photographs and visits to the site are highly monitored. Similarly, the project is not more or less with lightning.









### Phenomena of the Street

The pattern of the facade reflects an anonymity to the entire project. This field is not one of horizontal expanse, but rather of repetition. The architectural project is not a horizontal field itself but the image of the project parallels the spirit of the field. Therefore, the architecture is neutral but accommodating of variations. It becomes a context from which interactions and relationships emerge, but does not need to prescribe those relationships.

### Phenomena of Nature

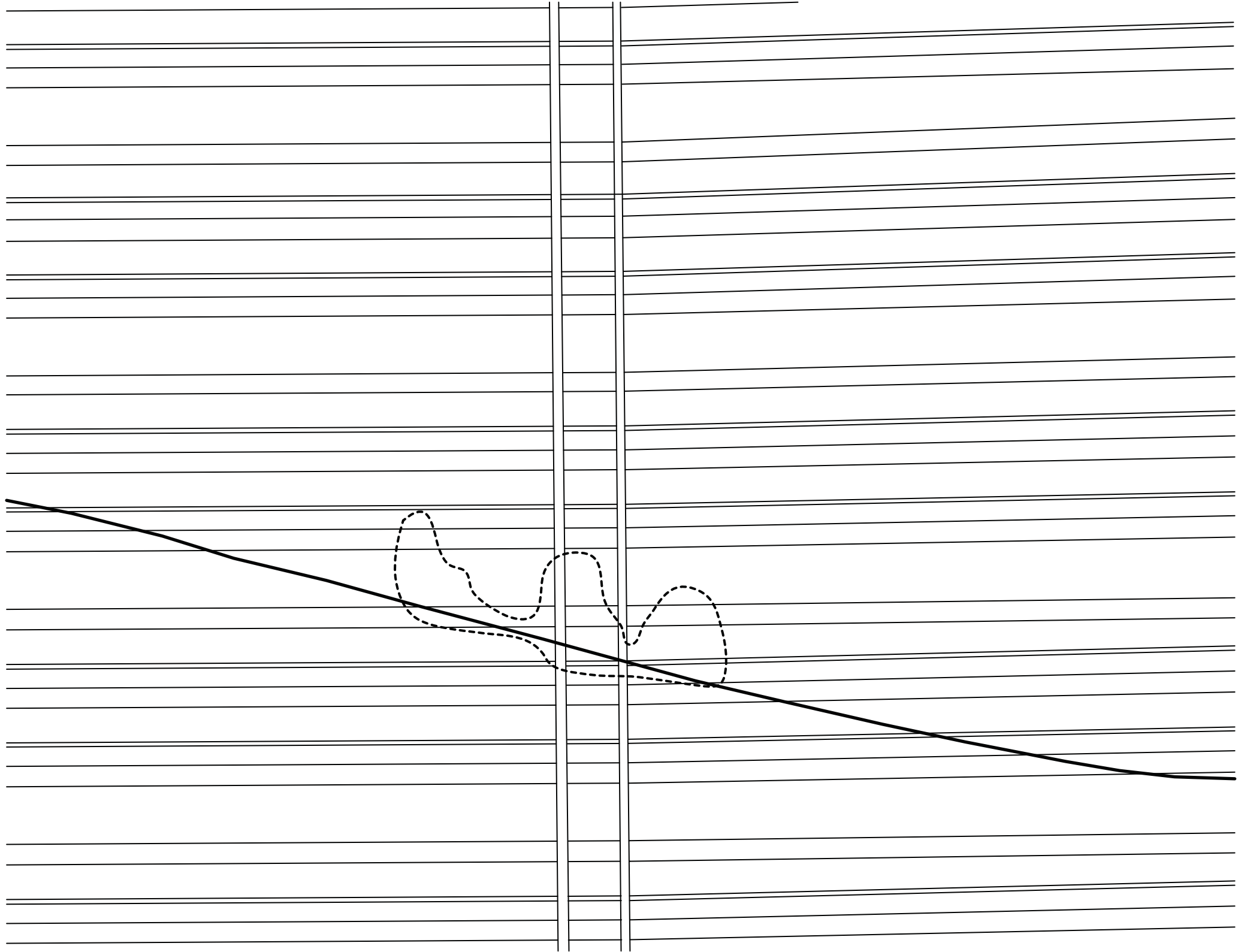
This field is a collection of lightning rods that share a height and are consistently spaced. Although quite literally a field, the intensity of its repetition is not recognizable through its scale and materiality. A unique quality to this field is the strike of lightning however, because this phenomena is not required to demonstrate the field. In this way, Lightning Field is quite literally a conduit but not because of the lightning. If it were about the lightning, the project would be much more effective as a large tower. Instead of a singular tower, this field creates an opportunistic condition wherein a lightning strike might happen. Or it might not.

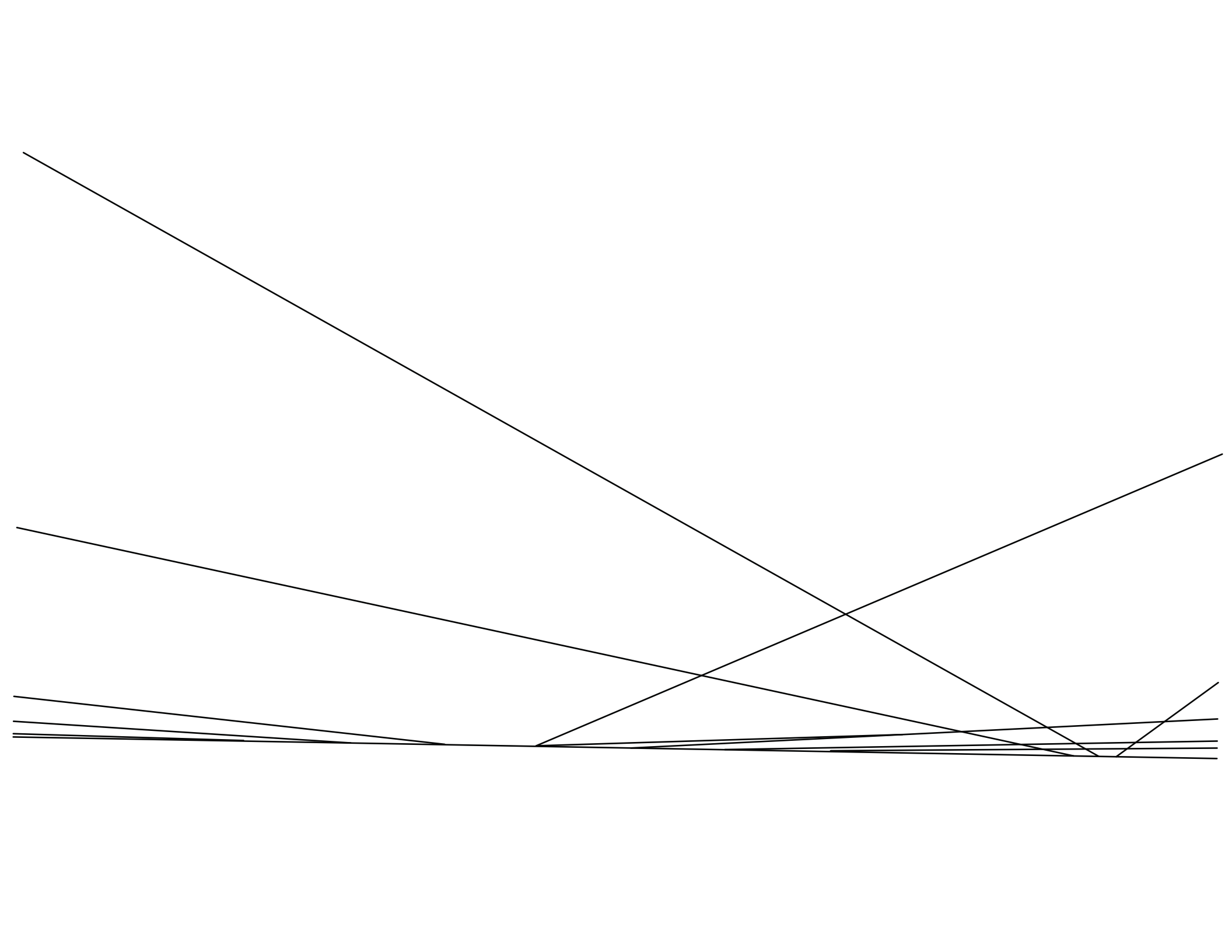




















# Great Mosque at Cordoba

[500] AD

The mosque is a sacred place. However, the formation of internal spaces is not controlled by consistent, identical columns (Hypostyle Hall) because many of the columns have been reused or rebuilt and therefore they range in diameter. However, the spatial field neutralizes these differences. The position of the column is important, but only to perpetuate the space. This controlling system has allowed for the mosque to be added to, and keeps the building an "unfinished condition".

Although the mosque has a primary direction because of its orientation towards Mecca (represented by the Mihrab), the architectural grid does not suggest such an important axis.

Building for Worship

## Parking Garage

The repeated column grid, and expansive concrete landscape provide the ideal place for the “storing” of vehicles. The spatial field does not need to include any actual singularities because it is not expected. Rather, the ground surface is treated with the minimal information to accomodate movement although these additions do not actually shape the space, rather become an immaterial surface turning the horizontal plane into a game board.

Whether full or empty, the interior persective of the parking garage is never “finished” and would only be considered such if one were searching for a spot and the lot is full. The organization of cars is directional only as a result of the entry and exits.

Building for Vehicles









*“Parts are not fragments of wholes, but simply parts...the structure can be added onto without substantial morphological transformation”*

- Stan Allen in *Field Conditions*

The conditions of a religious space do not require people. The spiritual importance extends beyond the physical limits of the building. The expanse of the mosque connects the worshippers to the greater Islamic faith.

*“Typical Plan is relentlessly  
enabling, enobling,  
background”*

- Rem Koolhaas in *Typical Plan* (341)

Physical assemblies are necessary to articulate the space. Without the columns, and concrete systems, the space would not exist. However, the “function” of the space is not inherently necessary to it, more a framework. The vehicles are just a temporary condition.









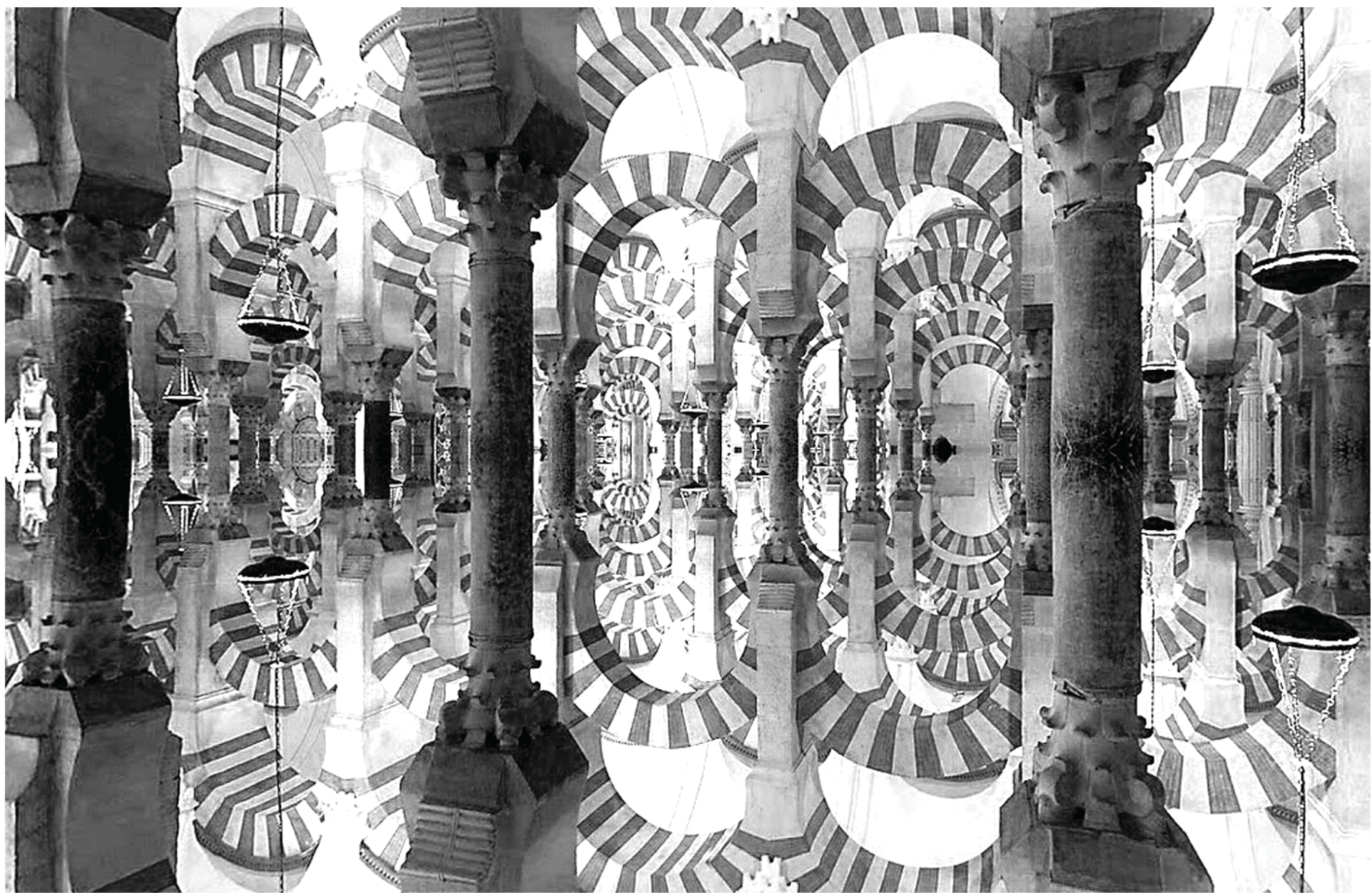
## Mosque

The internal form of the mosque shares many characteristics to that of the parking garage. The function of the space is spiritual, but the spatial requirements are more important than the architectural elements. Therefore, like the parking garage, each column in this field is slightly different but this reality is not a determining factor in the quality of the space.

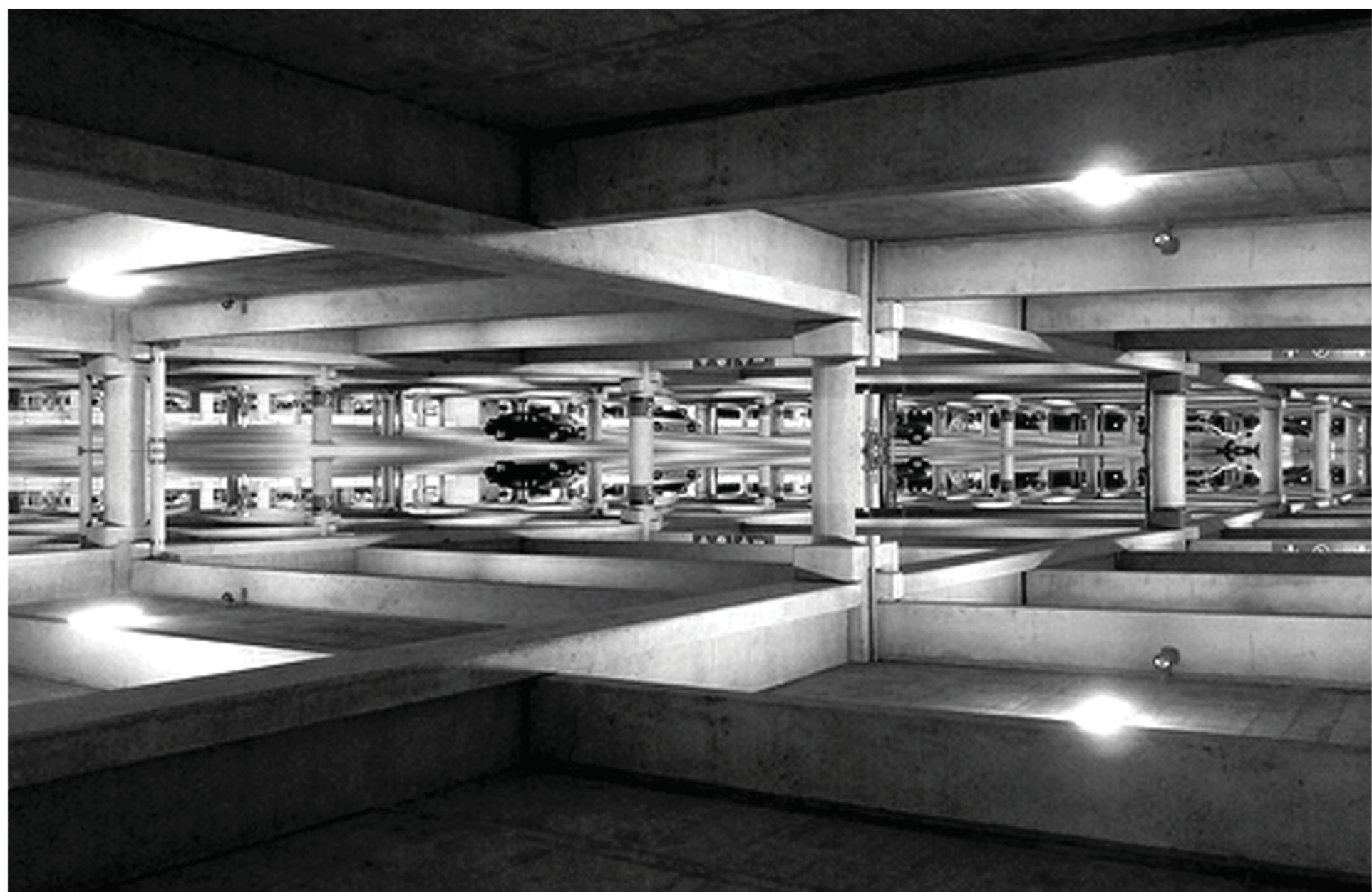
### Parking Garage

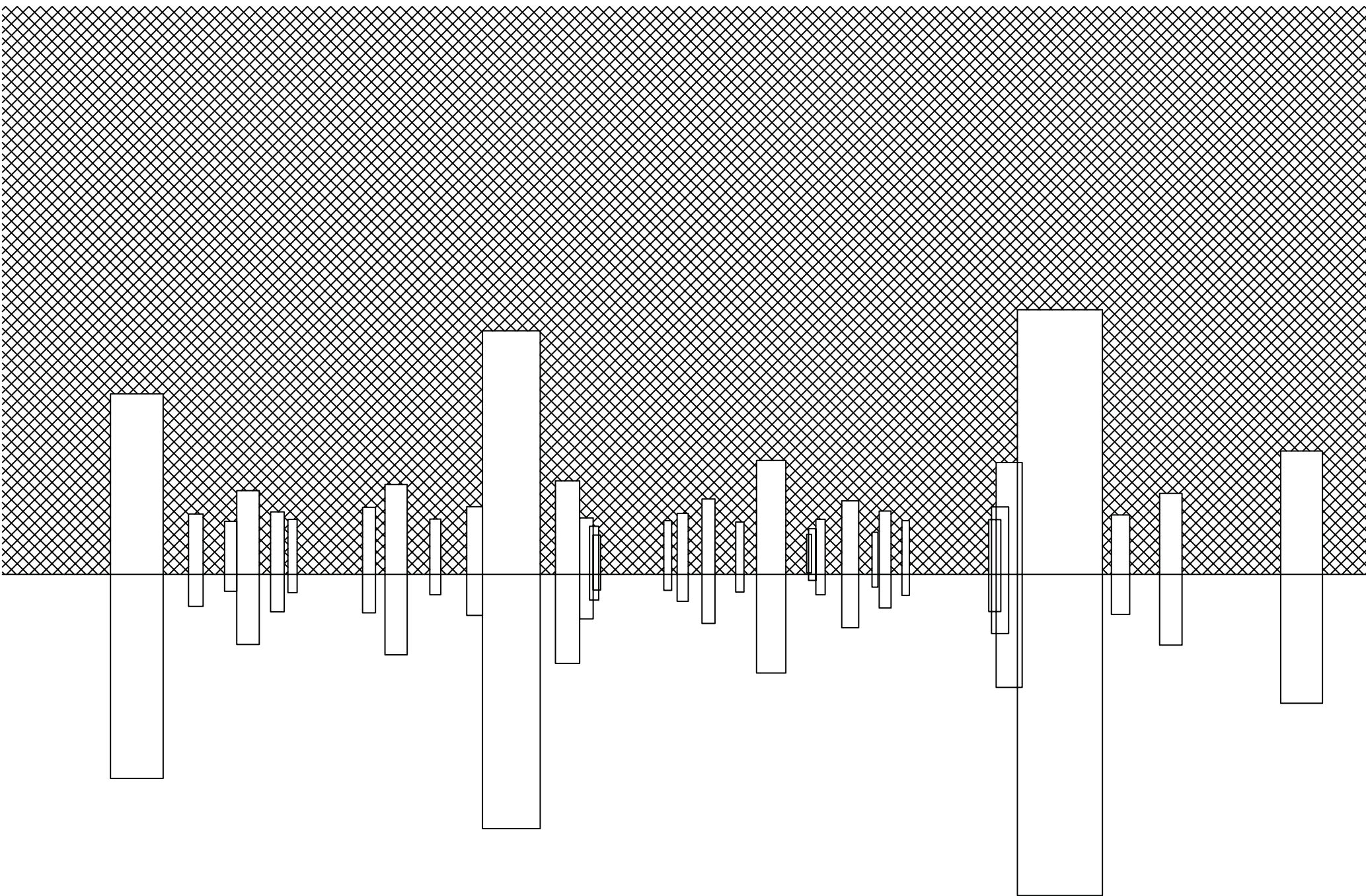
The function of this field changes the expectations that it holds. The “form” or repeated bays do not articulate any particular purpose but instead the markings on the ground surface differentiate the places inside this field from one another. Therefore, the editing of these surfaces changes the entire field. To design in this field, each structuring element (column) is necessary to articulate the bay, but not important enough to differentiate any particular place in the field. One column can be switched with another and it does not affect the field.

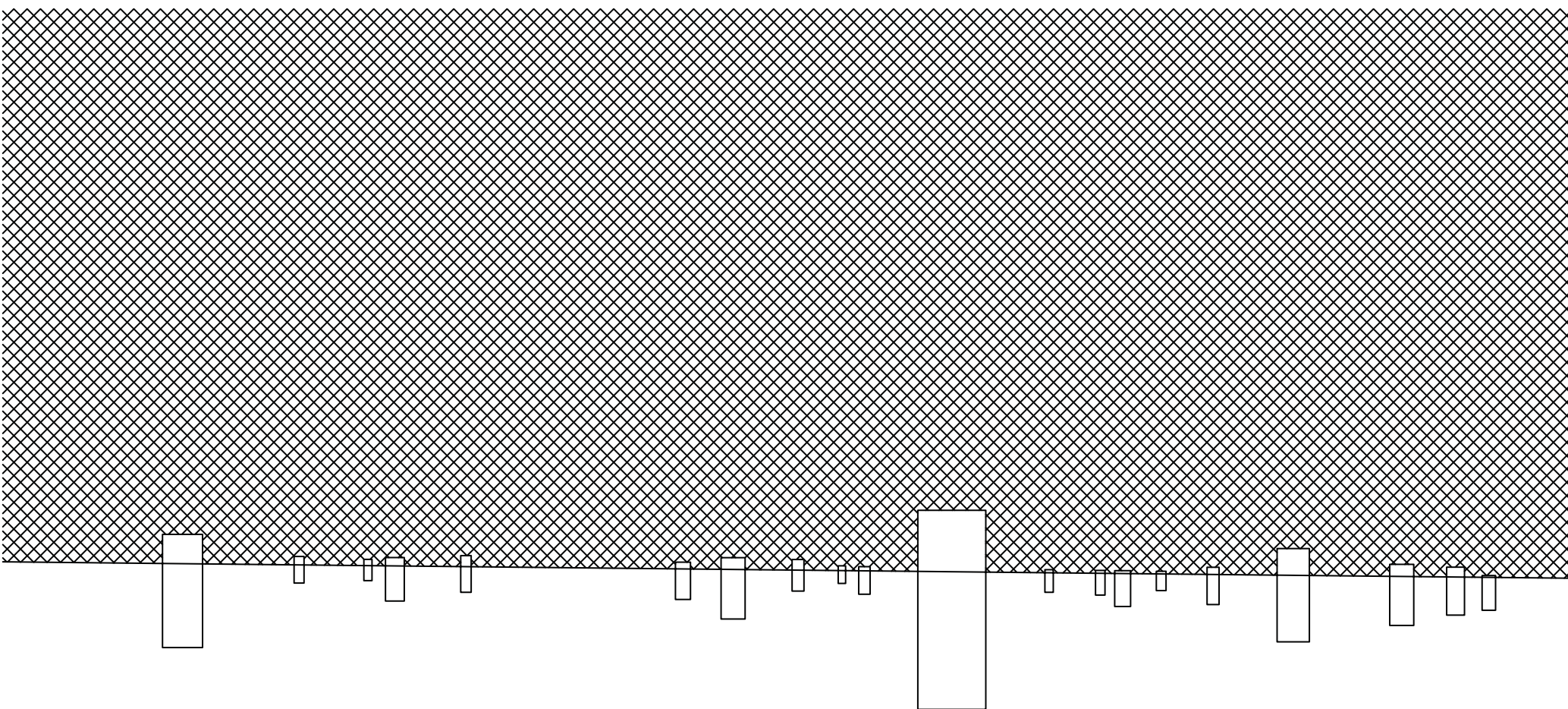








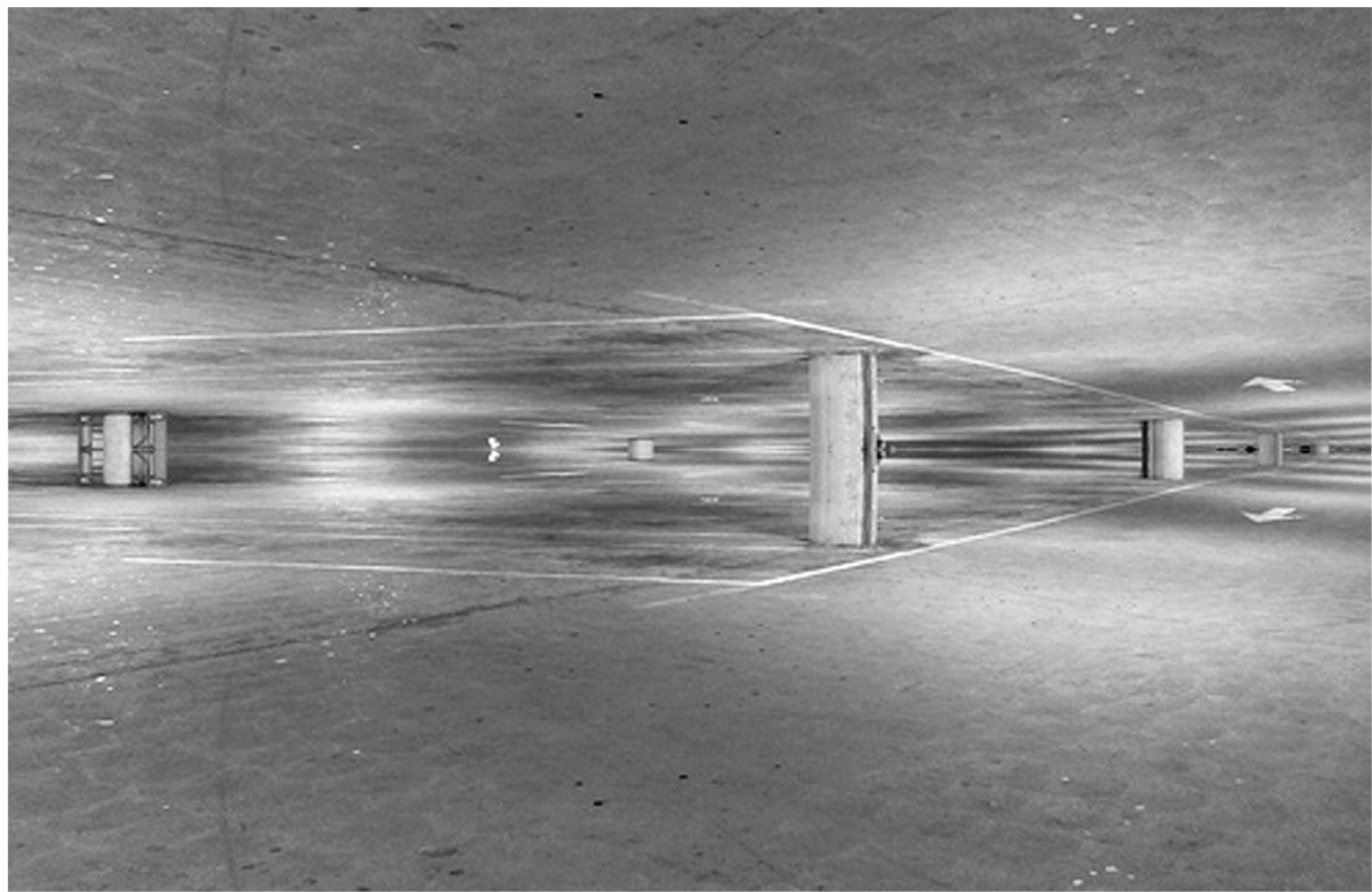












# No-Stop City

Archizoom

1969

The No-Stop City was thought as much a political commentary as it was an architectural proposition. However, the radicality of the project lies in the seemingly infinite, interior landscape comprised of industrial and consumer goods. The “architecture” of the project is of such rigorous repetition (a typical bay) that the horizon line and the columns create a “mise en abyme”; without mirrors.

The repetition of minimal elements neutralizes the interior perspective from any singularities and embeds the perspective image with the same monotony of the plan.

Repetitive Grid

## 4'-33"

John Cage

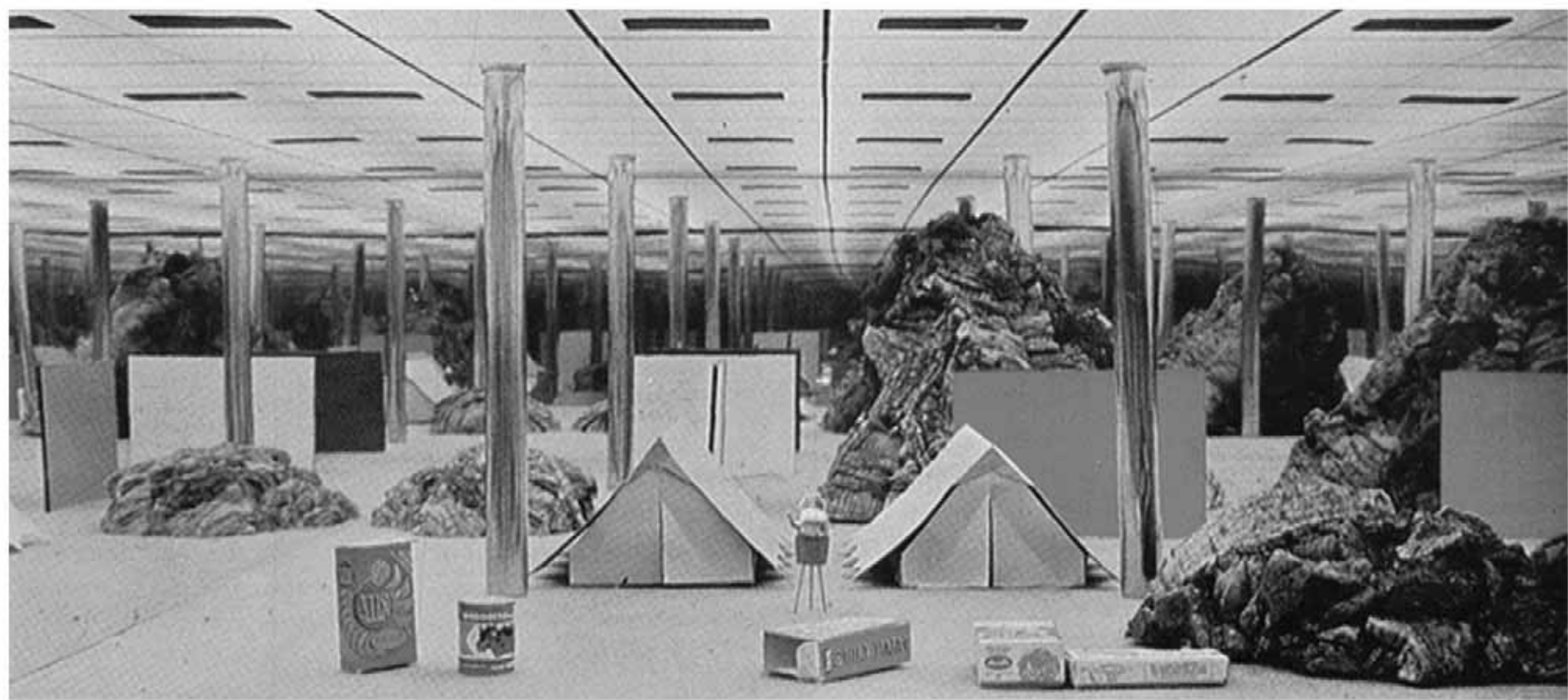
1952

For a "musical score" to contain four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence, it is important that this monotony of silence does more than just evacuate a performance from sound.

The "field" of silence subverts the importance of produced, formal sounds by not providing them, which elevates residual sounds and unpredictable noises to the level of music (expected, formal constructions). This raised awareness is only possible by the combination of expectations for music and the "played silence" of the piece.

Silent Music







*"No-Stop City is a qualityless city in which the individual can achieve his own housing conditions as a creative, freed and personal activity"*

- Branzi, Introduction to *No-Stop City*

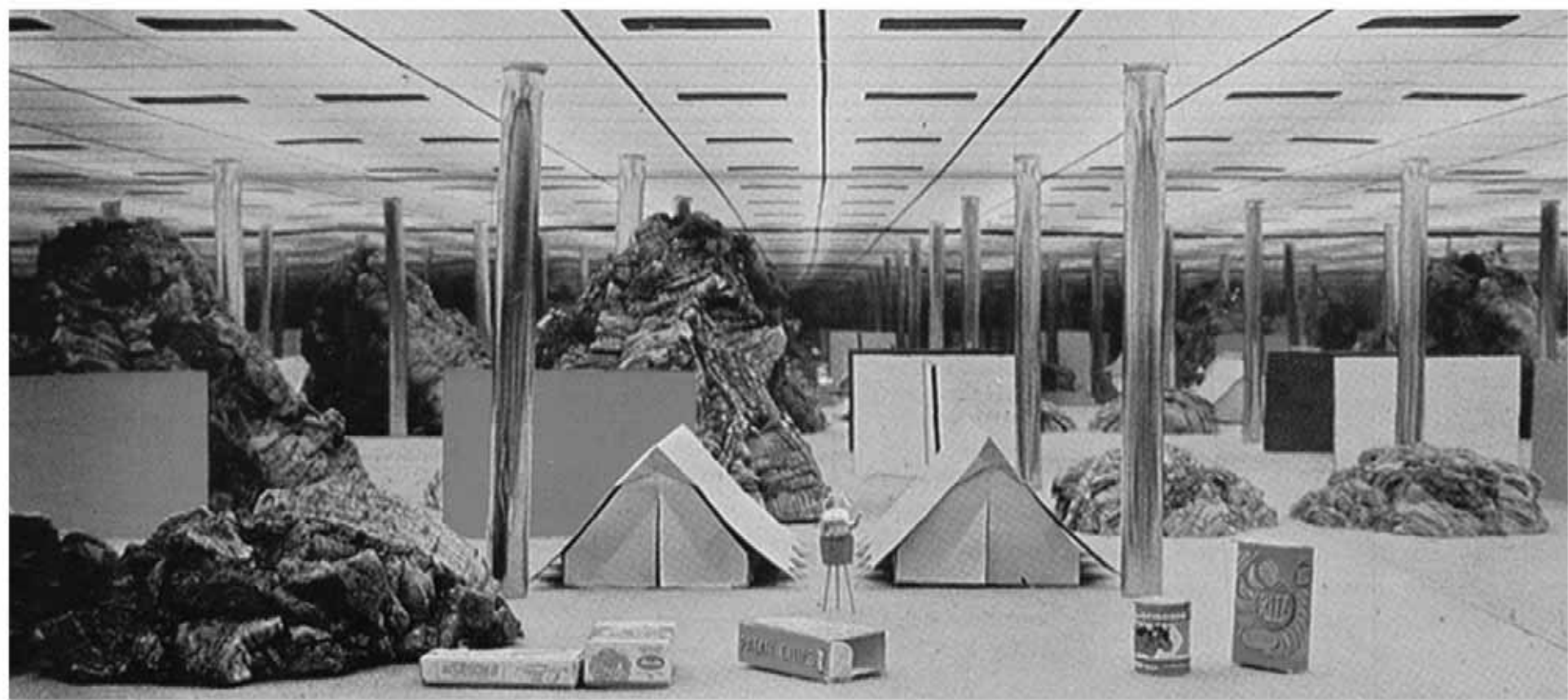
The expansive groundscape is structured by a relentlessly indistinguishable field of columns, creating equal bays and an artificial site condition.

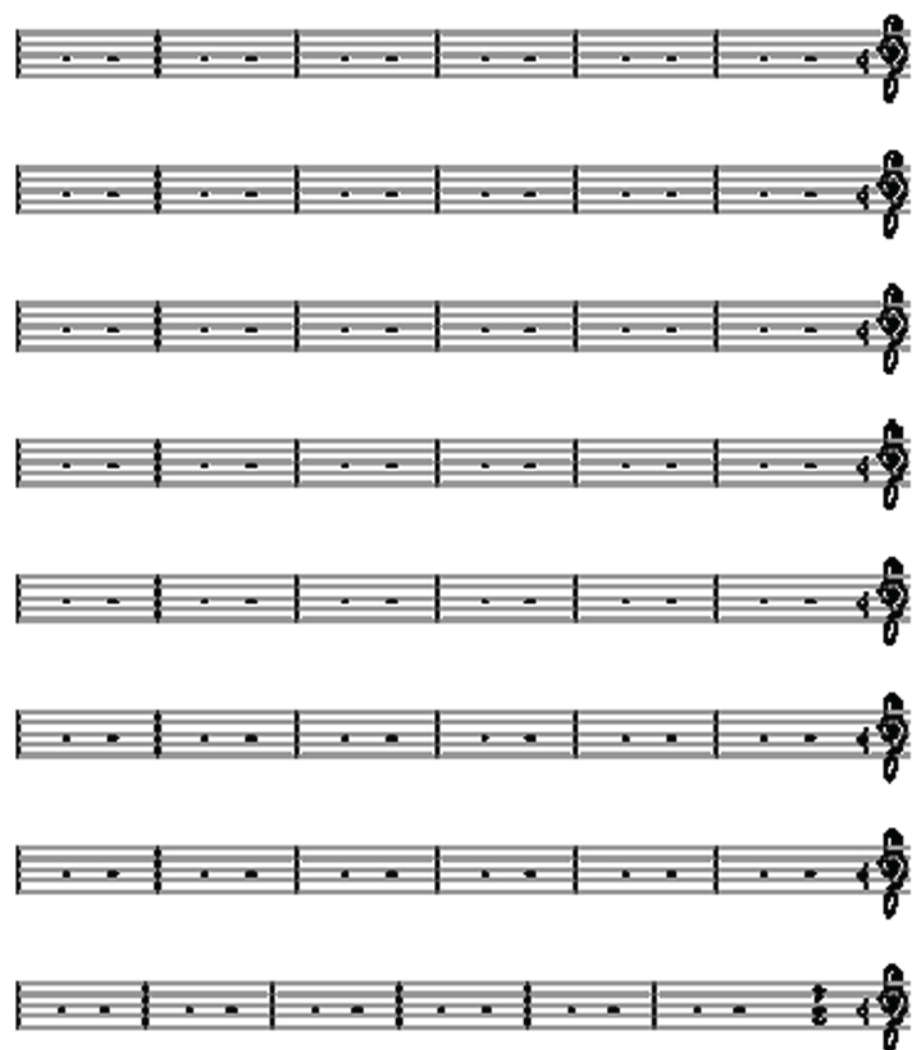


*“‘Having nothing to say’  
allows that environment the  
opportunity to speak”*

- Shultis, *Silencing the Sounded Self*

The bars are a framework, and the musical projections are temporary condition of purposeful sound. This field is made of an array of moments of silence, thereby elevating incidental sounds to the level of purposeful sound.





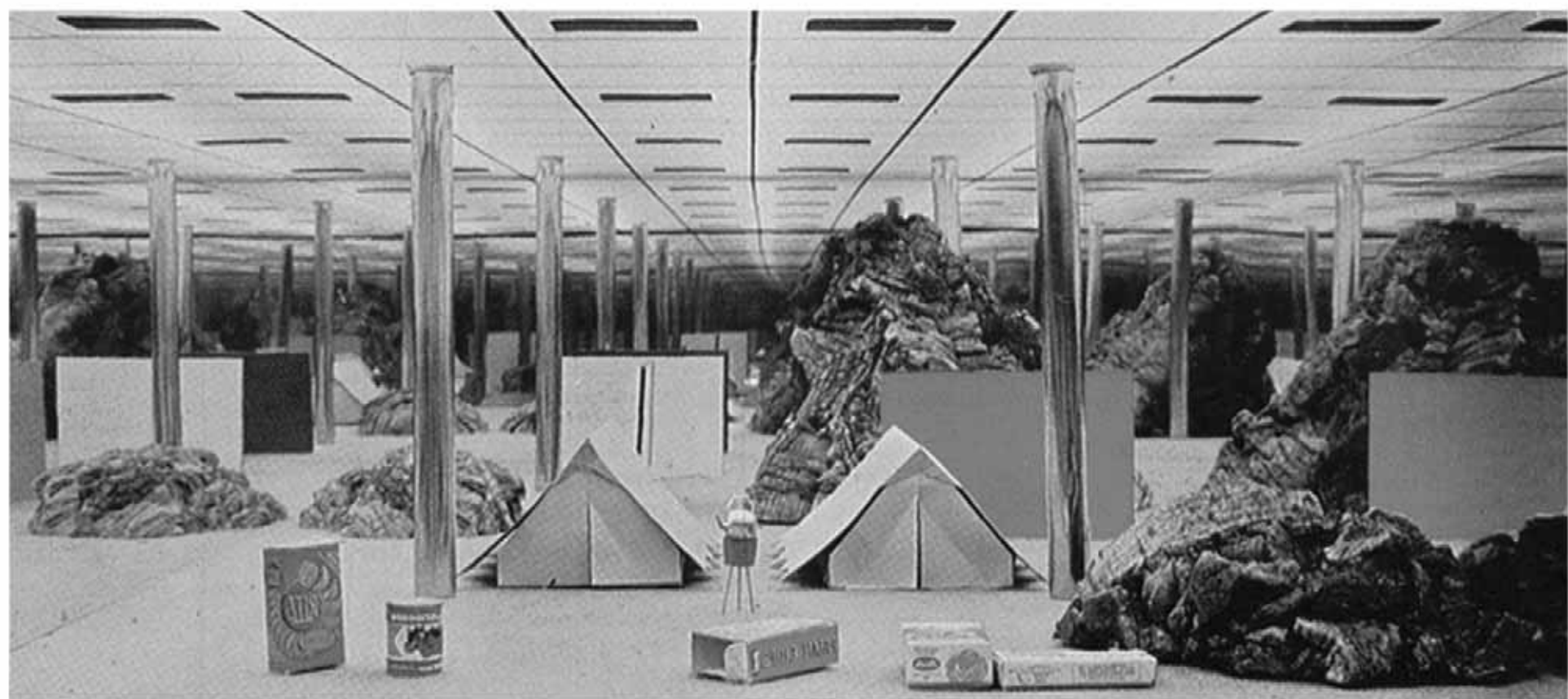


### Theoretical Architectural Proposal

This field is empty of any unique characteristics and is without scale. This is a unique characteristic because it can accommodate any interior condition but cannot dictate any specific interior condition itself. The repetition of bays extends to the horizon and each can be fitted with a new layer of texture (objects, materials, functions) to define the type of field it is. However, this is not a flaw but an opportunity to accommodate changing conditions without changing anything. Therefore, this field is a platform or medium.

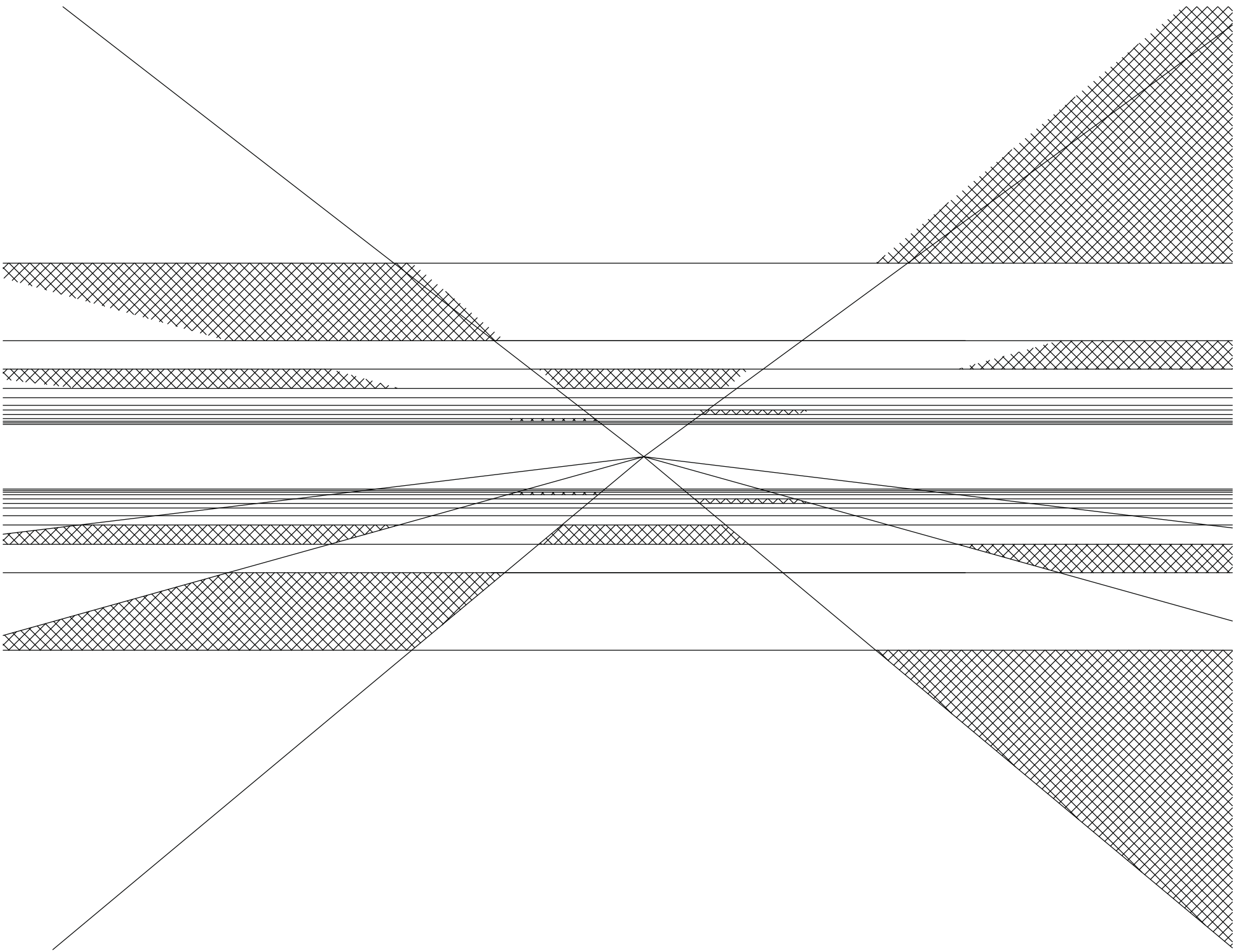
### Musical Performance

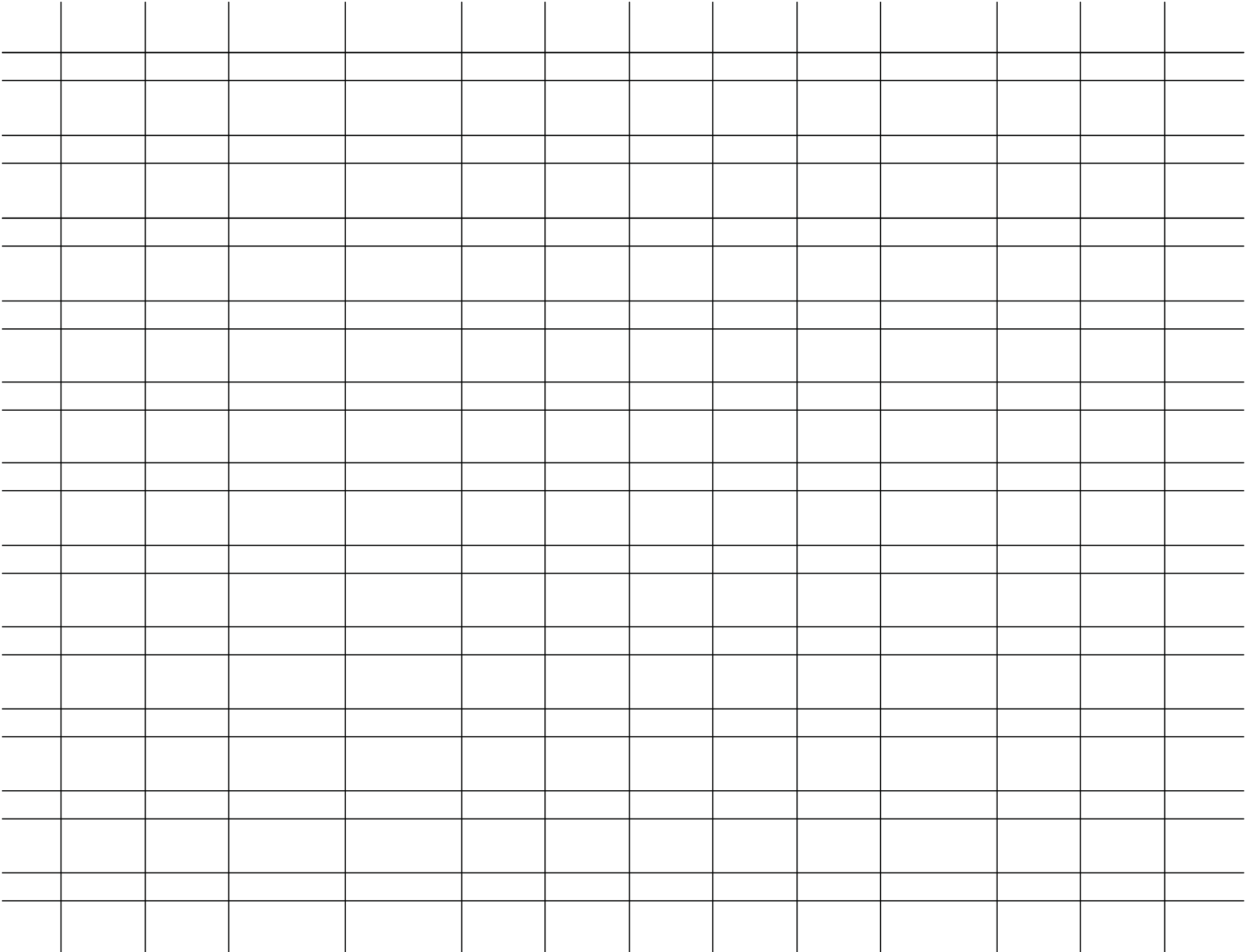
The emptiness of 4'33" is not merely the absence of deliberate sound but the combination of expectation and setting. 4'33" can be "played" in a range of contexts, however each context has the ability to impress on the piece so that its manifestation takes a different form each time. To design in this field is to subvert any unique qualities or deploy an architecture that is more platform than device.



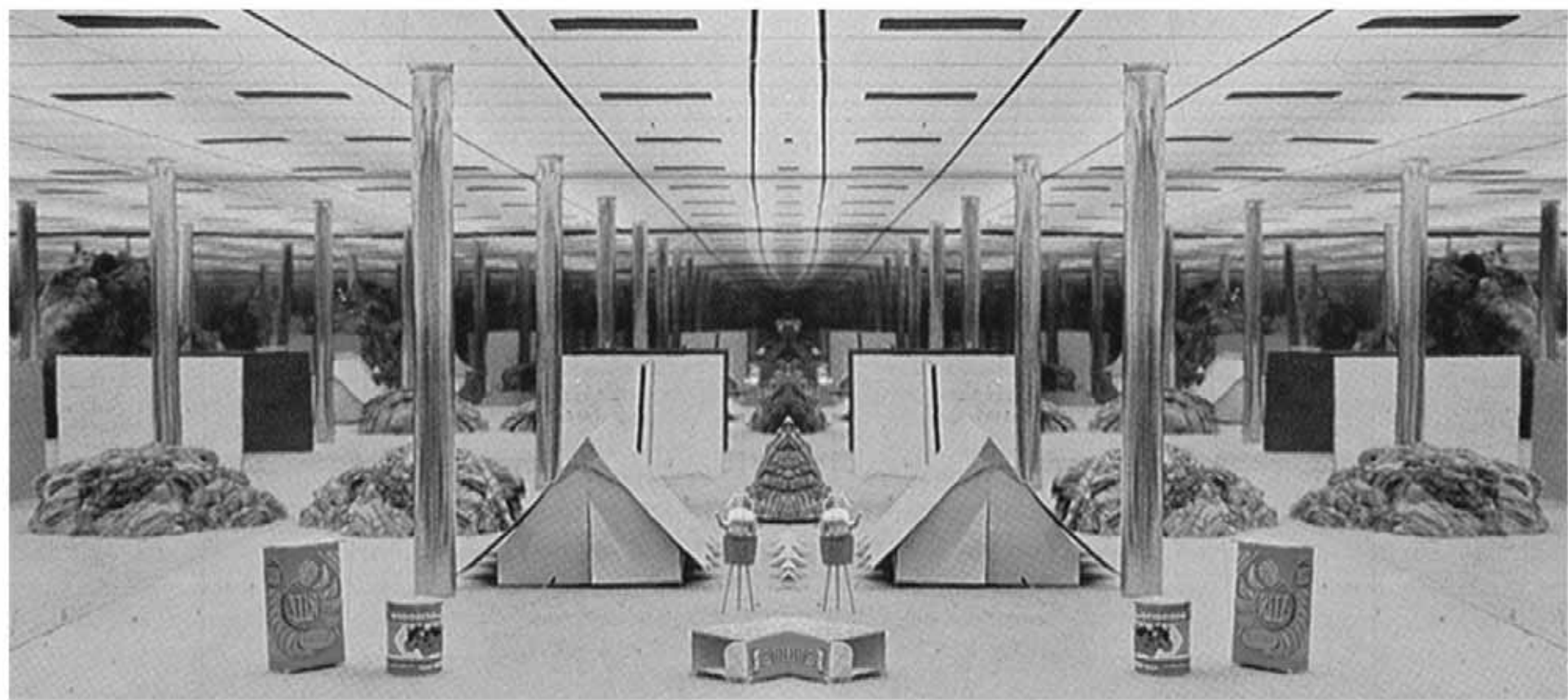


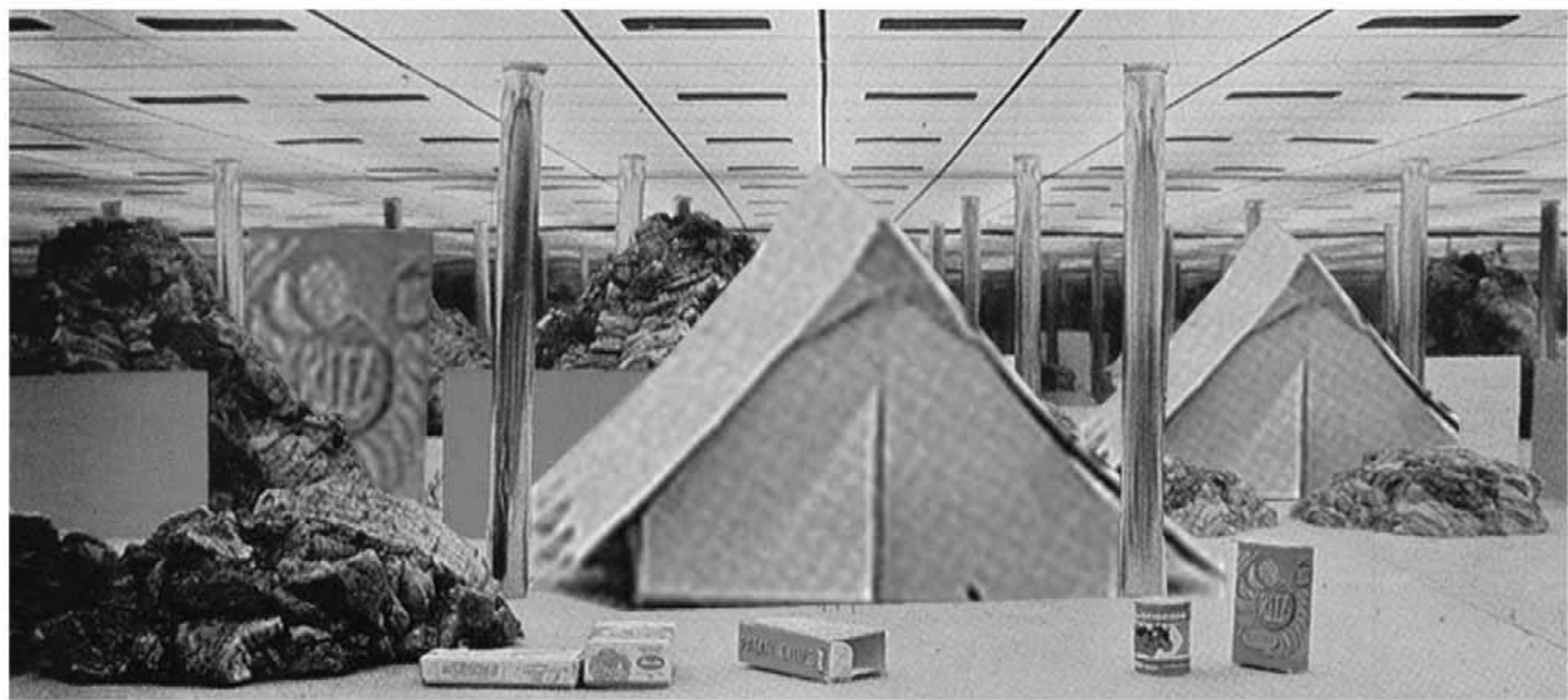












# The Economist Plaza

Alison and Peter Smithson

1959 - 1964

The field of the Economist is the distribution of multiple buildings on a end site, with an elevated plaza, without a particular procession. The corners of the buildings are chamfered and the facade recessed on the ground level to create a layering of spaces between the urban street, open plaza, covered interior, and formal interior space. The layering of space, produced by the distribution of multiple buildings, allows the project to become integral in the urban fabric, and not a singular moment but rather a field embedded. Each facade is treated the same which creates an anonymity between the three new buildings, allowing for a space without a prescribed expectation of movement.

Urban Wandering

## Moriyama House

SANAA

2005

This residence distributes the otherwise internal spaces of the house across a site, creating a spatial field of rooms. Although the house is a private residence, several of the units on the site are apartments which intertwines public space with private walks to such a degree that the two are indistinguishable.

The exterior treatment of white allows each individual unit to fade into the next, while the distribution of space allows the house itself to fade into the familiar conditions of the city; the house that can be wandered into and out of.

Residential Wandering









*“...the man in the street can choose to find his ‘secret’ way about his city and can develop further urban sensibilities, evolving from his own contribution to the quality of use”*

*- Shultis, Silencing the Sounded Self*

The separation of buildings, connected with a elevated plaza, becomes a place for wandering. The center of this space is not of any particular significance.

*“He may switch among the series of living rooms and dining rooms or use several rooms at a time according to the season or other circumstances.”*

- SANAA in El Croquis Vol. 139

The elements of the house are necessary for personal functions. These provide amenities and personal space. However, instead of a singular condition, the Moriyama House separates these functions, and intertwines public relationships within the private domain.









## Public

This is a field embedded within a field. The interstitial space between the multiple buildings creates a spatial condition without a prescribed use. The field is differentiated from the urban field it is positioned within by a change in elevation: a raised plaza. In addition, the paving pattern of the plaza extends inside the edges of the outer columns, and inside of the glazing. Therefore, the urban field allows for the designer to free oneself from the internal flows and expectations of the street.

### Private

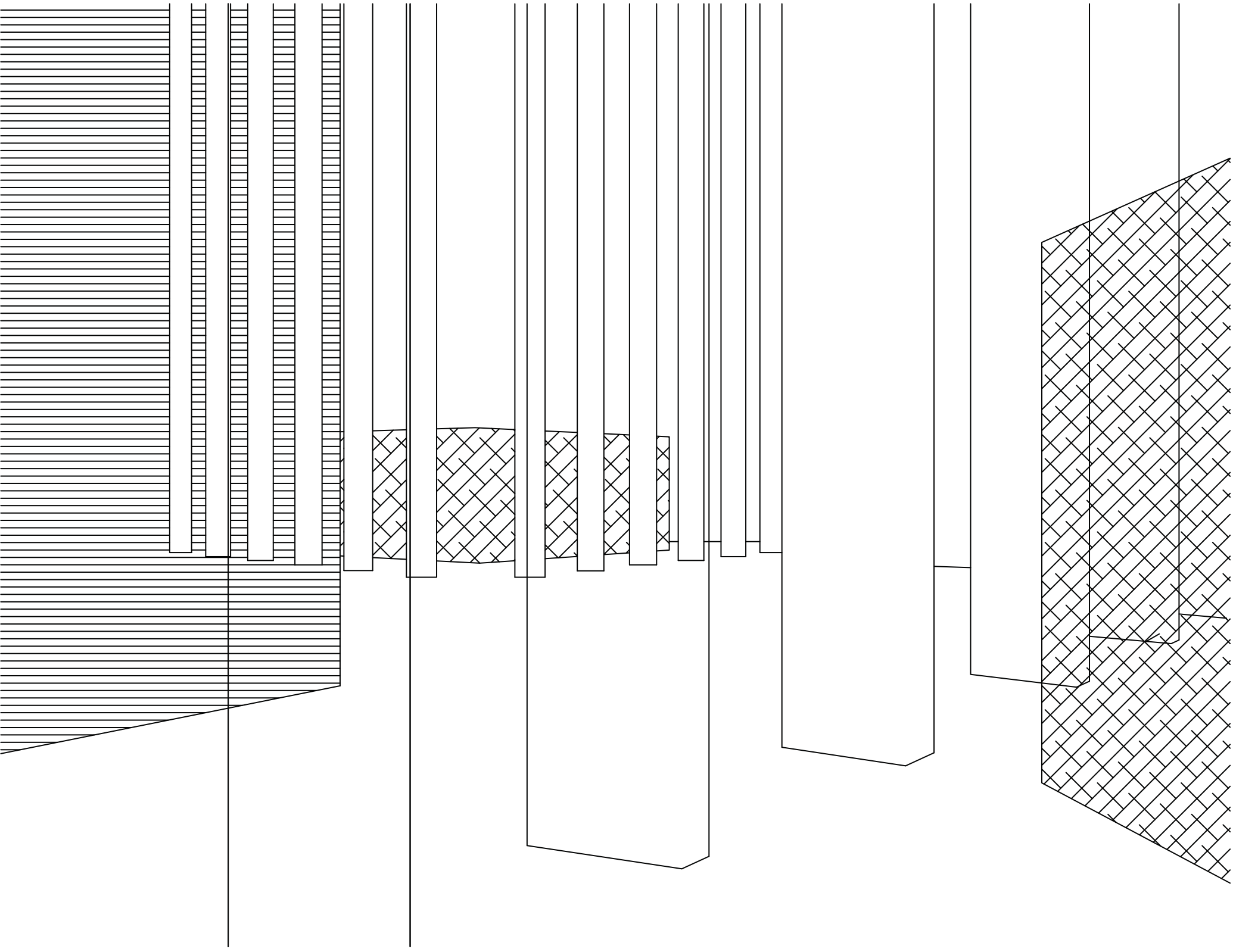
This is a field embedded within a field. The collection of built units reflects the urban conditions in which this house is positioned. However, this interstitial space is of a different character because the defining bounds of this field occur at the scale of the domicile. This field can be wandered into in the same way that one can wander into the Economist plaza, except that the expectation for privacy or interaction is shifted because the field is comprised of programs with a commonly-regarded expectation of privacy.

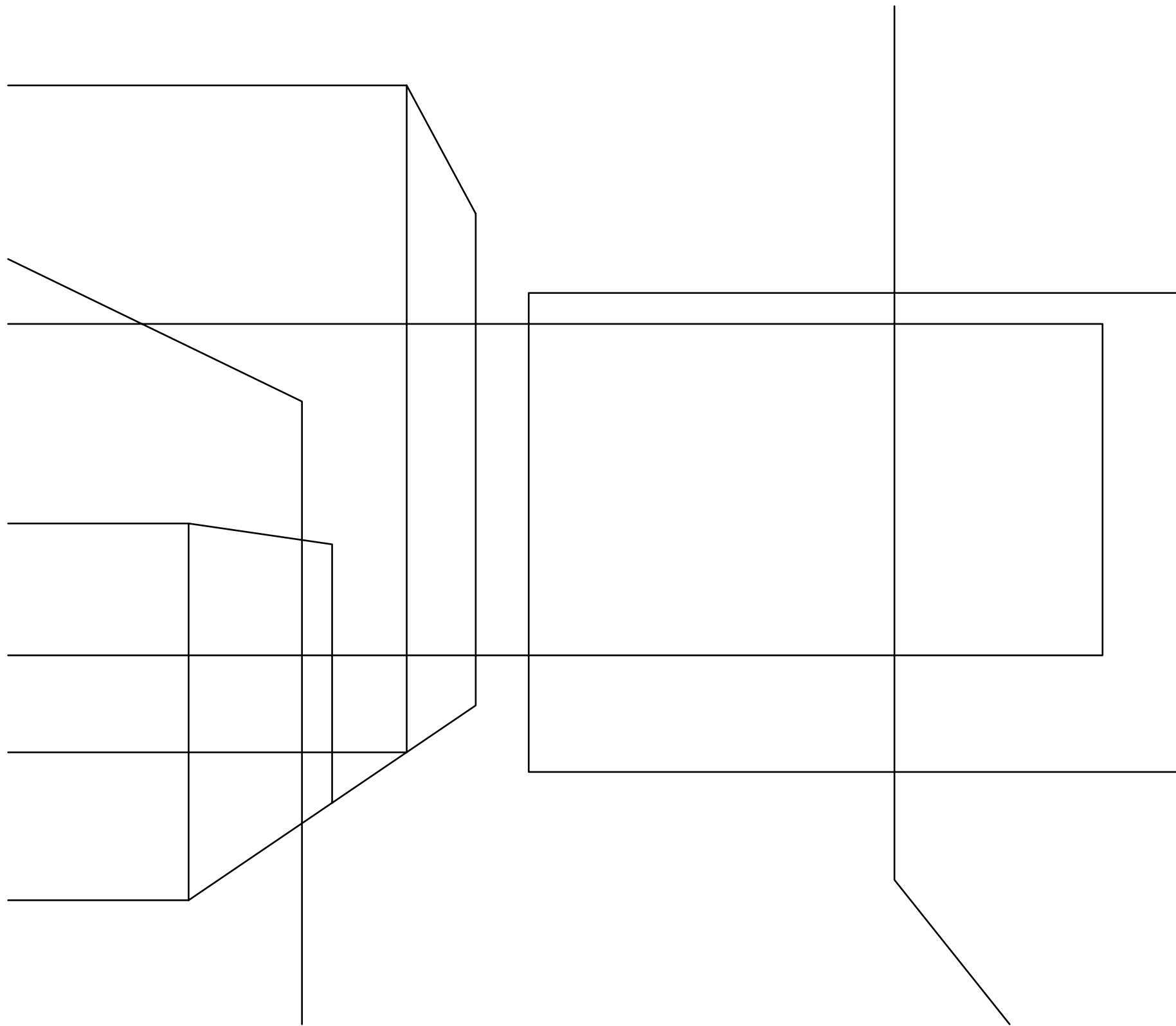




















## "Electric Counterpoint - Fast (Movement 3)"

Steve Reich

1989

This piece is composed as an assembly of guitar players, but each one plays a repeating a series of repeating notes and chords.

The layering of repeating sounds creates a constantly changing condition although the actions of each player remain identical.

Each time another layer is added, the overall composition changes, while at the same time no single element has changed.

As a musical composition, the work becomes anonymous because it does not vary. It has no high or low, but instead hums. Although the collective carries a particular sound, each of the components can still be identified.

Repetitive Chords

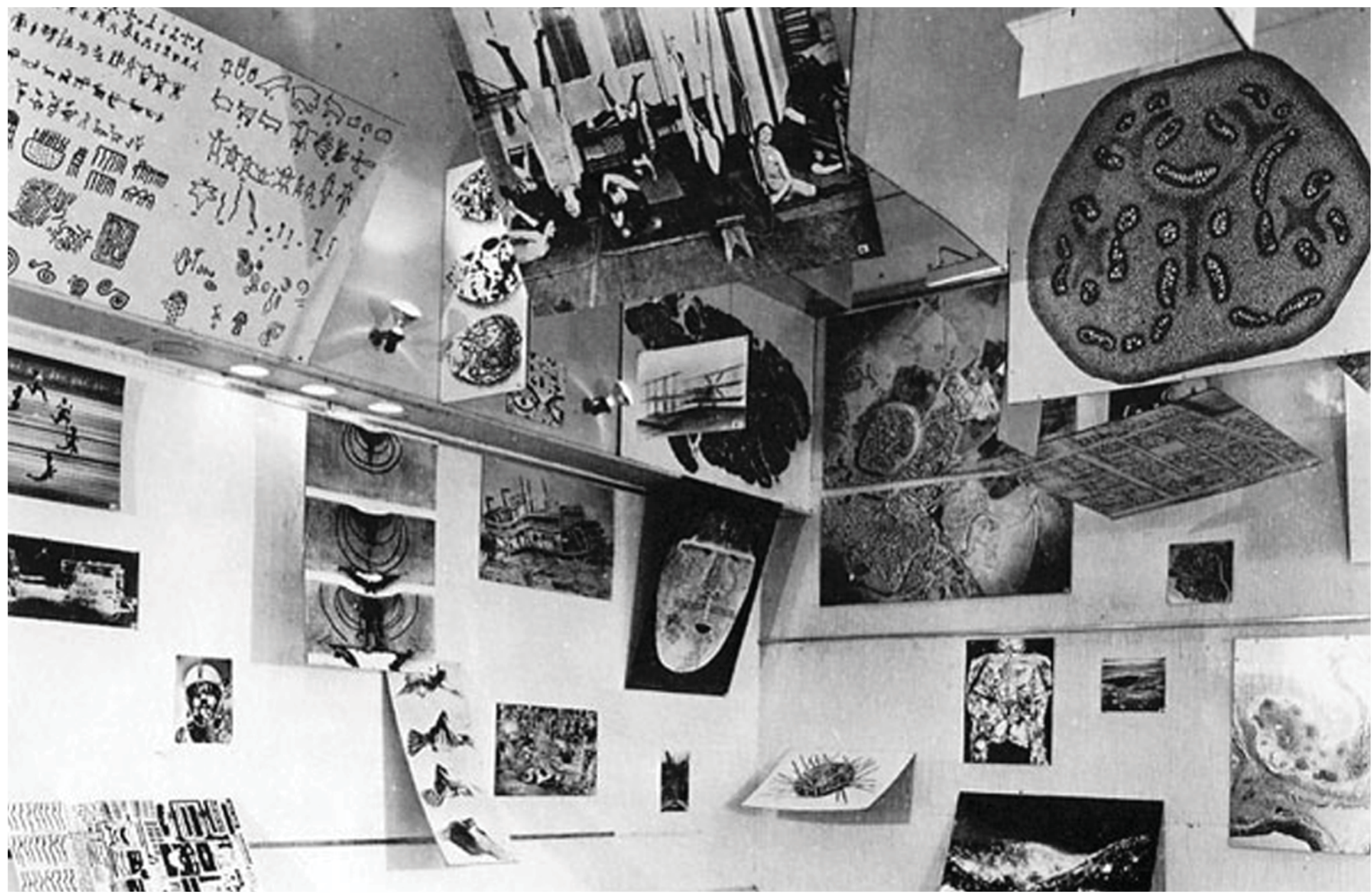
## "The Parallel of Life and Art"

Alison and Peter Smithson, Nigel Henderson,  
Eduardo Paolozzi, Ronald Jenkins  
September - October 1953

As a collection of images the exhibition is not to be read from any particular point or moment, both in content and perspective. The interior is distributed with images art, x-rays, photographs, diagrams; all of which create a new field of space without a way of looking at them. Through the positioning of the individual objects in different orientations and at different angles, the perspective of the space is constantly in flux. The exhibition is not designed as much as it is made, with the interaction between viewer and images to be one of self-discovery.

Repetitive Medium







III

Live Guitar  $\text{♩} = 192$

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

Guitar 3

Guitar 4

Guitar 5

Guitar 6

Guitar 7

Bass Guitar 1

Bass Guitar 2

Live

Or. 1

Or. 2

Or. 3

Or. 4

Or. 5

Or. 6

Or. 7

B. Or. 1

B. Or. 2

Live

Or. 1

Or. 2

Or. 3

Or. 4

Or. 5

Or. 6

Or. 7

B. Or. 1

B. Or. 2

Live

Or. 1

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B. Or. 1

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Live

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Live

Or. 1

Or. 2

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Or. 4

Or. 5

Or. 6

Or. 7

B. Or. 1

B. Or. 2

*"...often reveals startling emotional depths and surprises in the slowly emerging contours of the deceptively simple repeated phrase"*

- Rogovoy, *Steve Reich: Beauty in Repetition*

This work is a series of notes, layered in time, to generate a unique sound different than any one of the individual notes.

*“In short it forms a poetic-lyrical order where images create a series of cross-relationships”*

- Parallel of Life and Art: Indications of a New Visual Order

As a series of images, the significance of the work is not the individual images as images, but the collection / range of materials in such proximity.







11 Live

121

Or. 1

Or. 2

Or. 3

Or. 4

Or. 5

Or. 6

Or. 7

B. Or. 1

B. Or. 2

11 Live

121

Or. 1

Or. 2

Or. 3

Or. 4

Or. 5

Or. 6

Or. 7

B. Or. 1

B. Or. 2

11 Live

121

Or. 1

Or. 2

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### Layering of Images

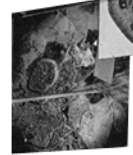
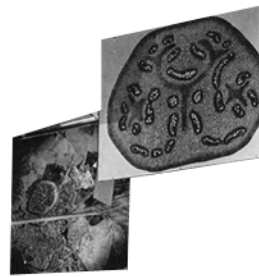
This field neutralizes content by positioning a range of materials in direct proximity to each other without an apparent order. Therefore, the field disregards any attempt to categorize the elements. There is no “X-ray wall” or “text wall” but instead there is just a field. To design in this field is to accommodate anything, which may lead to uncomfortable or unexpected relationships, yet because of the lack of prescription these relationships can be changed without compromising the quality of the field.



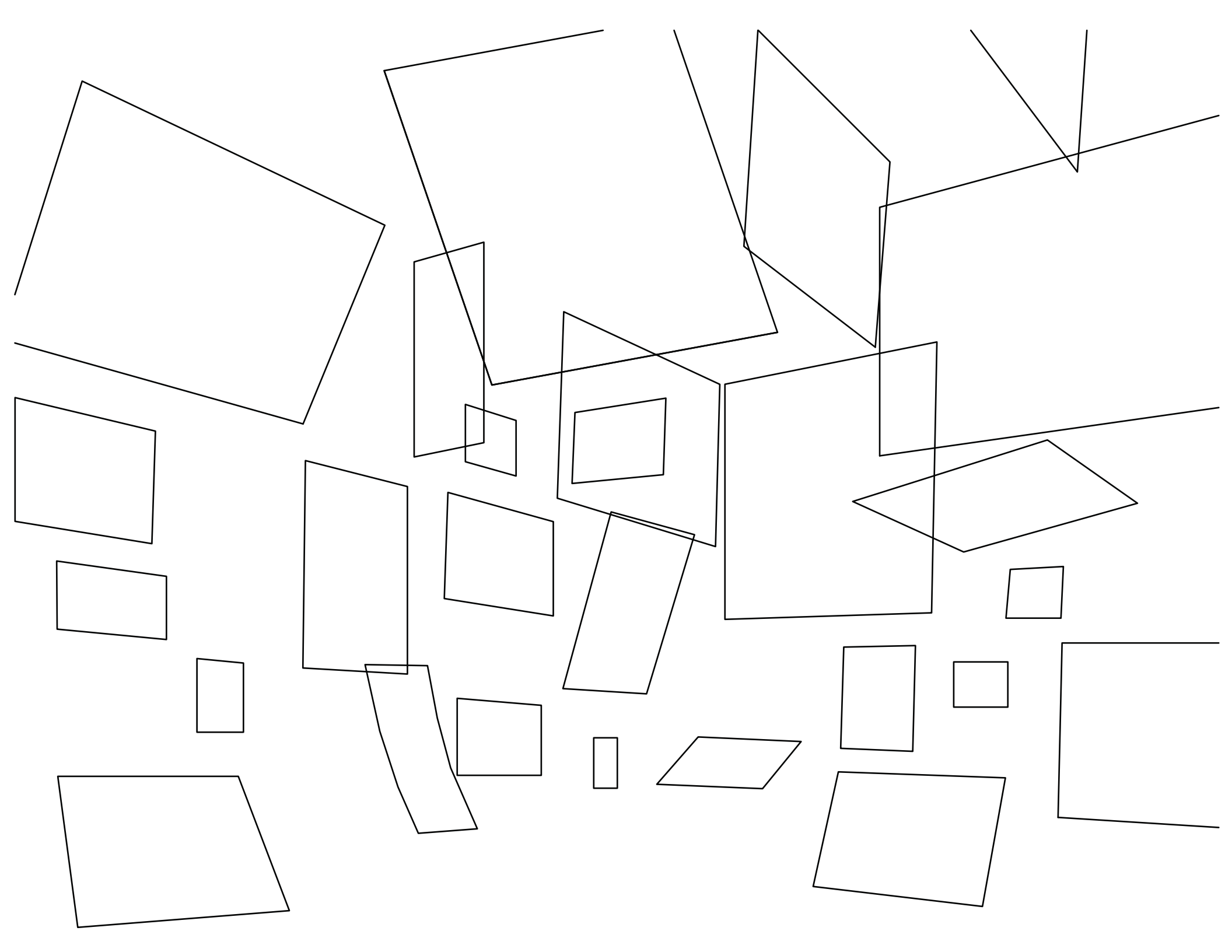
### Layering of Notes

This field is comprised a series of layers, each one unique. However, the layering of the repeated sounds creates an entirely new sound. To design in this field is to implement recognizable, complete elements with such rigor and stamina so that after a certain time (or amount of elements) the field emerges in a way unexpected based on the original elements.

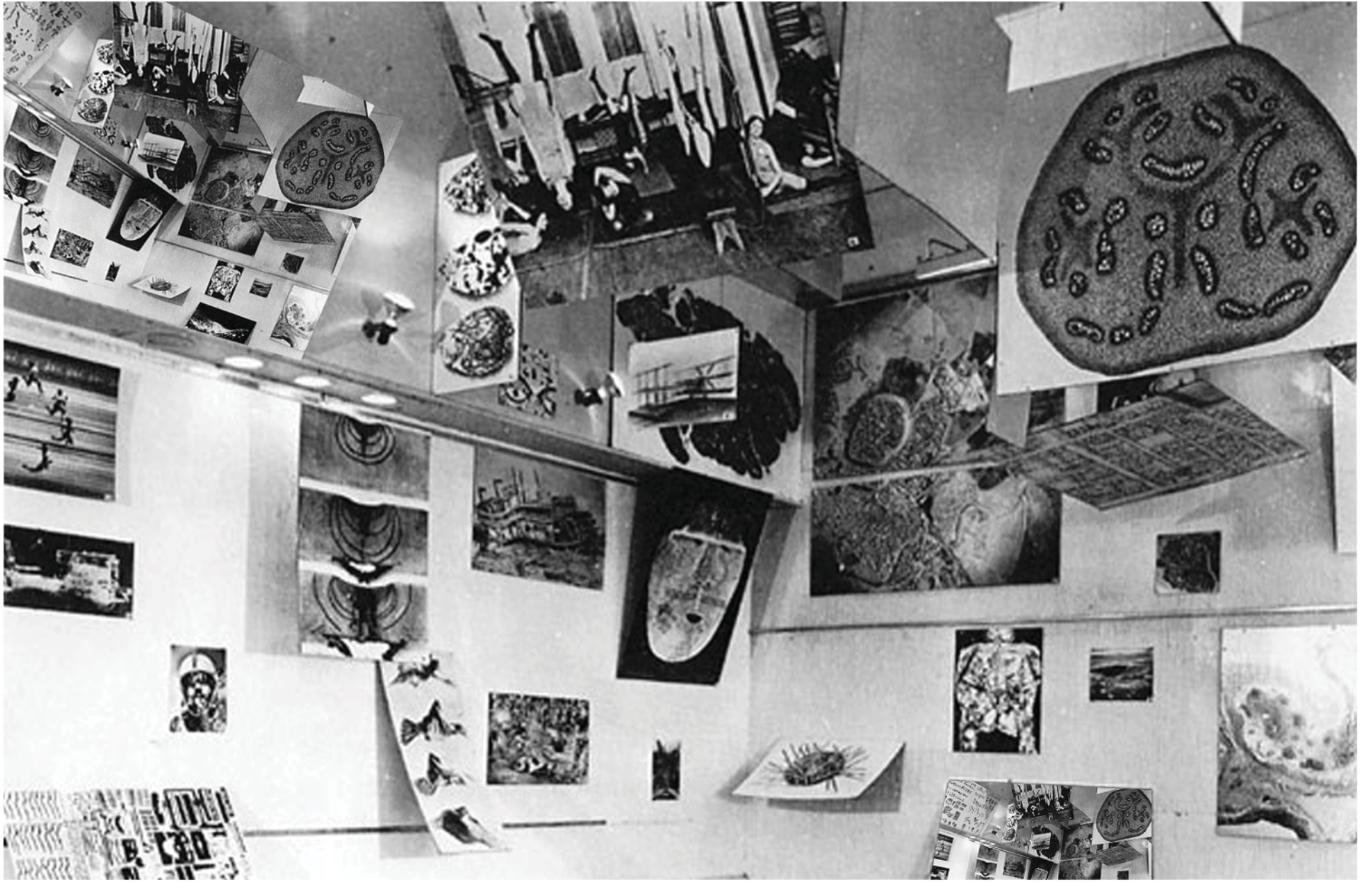
















## "The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away"

Yayoi Kusama,

from 'I Who Have Arrived in Heaven'

2013

This 'Infinity Room' uses suspended LED lights in a room of mirrors, with a floor of water, to create a perception of endlessness. The mirrors repeat the light over and over again, and as the viewer stands on the platform, they can see an other "versions" of themselves extending beyond.

Although the viewer is conscious of the work, the effect of the field is the neutralizing of oneself, making unsure which one is real.

Artificial

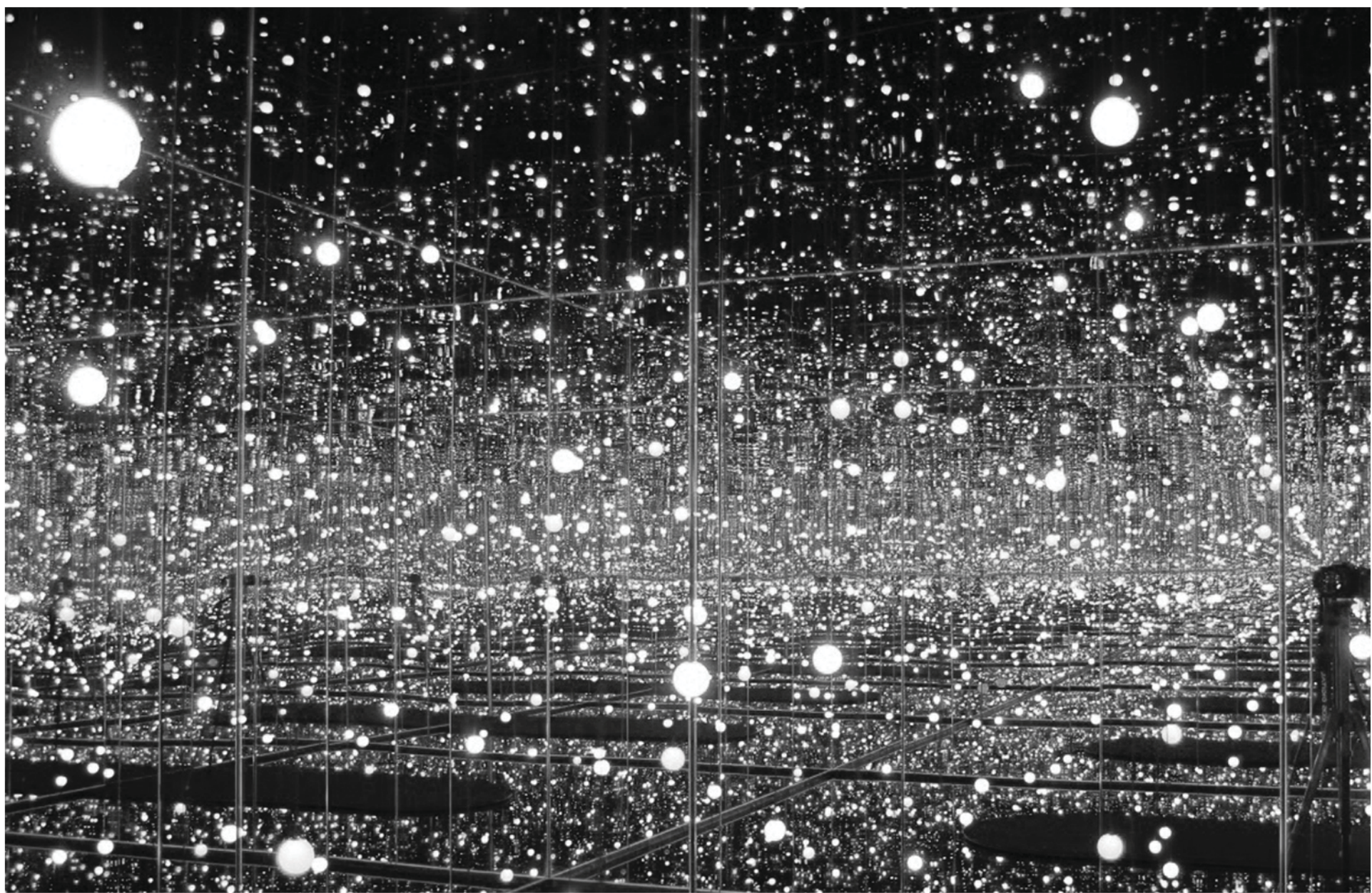
## Birch Forest

The forest is a natural assembly and yet it can be manipulated without visual consequences. The repetition of similar elements, the birch trees, gives the collection a shared characteristic while each tree is almost entirely different; in scale, pattern, and imperfection.

The field neutralizes the differences between the individual elements and creates a new relationship between them. However, the finality of the group is not important, and therefore can be added to or subtracted from without consequence to any single element.

Natural









*“...to revolve in the infinity of  
endless time and the  
absoluteness of space, and be  
reduced to nothingness”*

- Yayoi Kusama

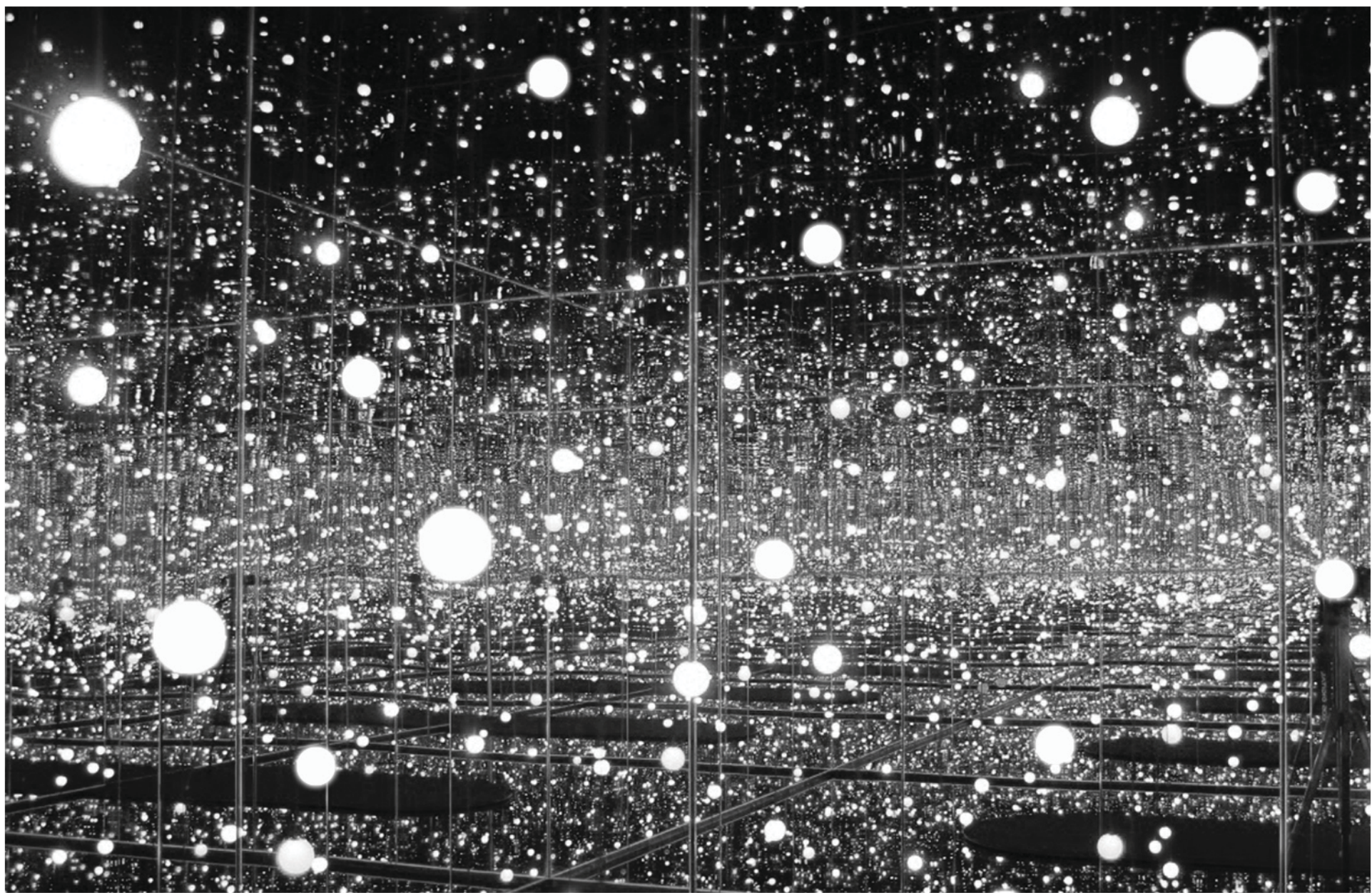
The infinity room combines a highly reflective surface and suspended objects to create a seemingly infinite, spatial field, of which no single object is important, rather the expansiveness of the space.



*“In the forest, in the rustling,  
I do not know where I am”*

- Joseph Freiherr from H.F.Bollnow's *Human Space*

The individual elements of the image, the groupings of birch trees, are not controlled by a system but instead become a legible group through the similarity in characteristics. This repetition prevents the viewer from identifying one single moment.









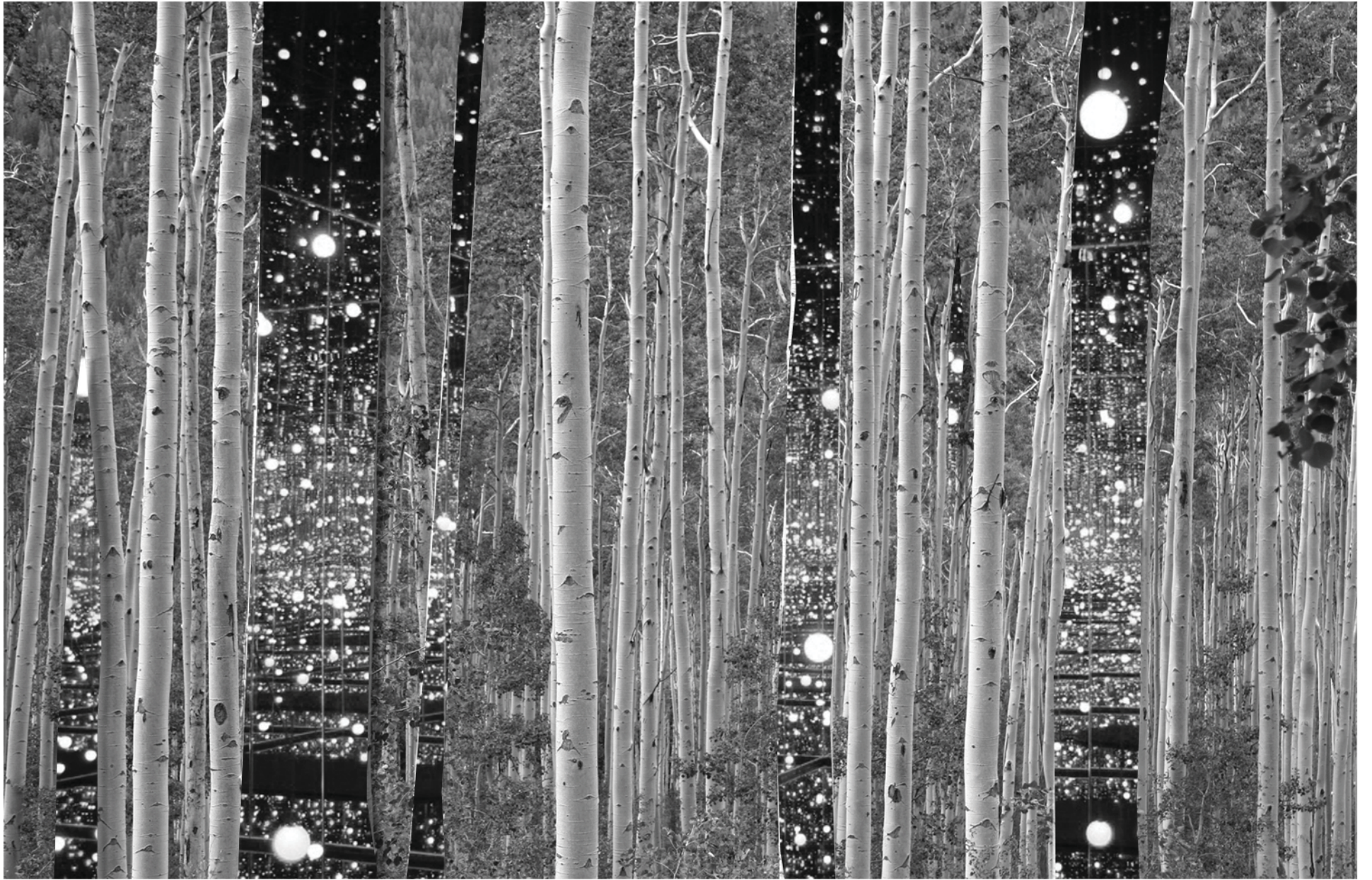
### Natural

This field is also comprised of individual elements that share very specific characteristics, except that each tree is not perfectly identical to another. Instead, the proximity, adjacency and consistency in certain traits are enough to establish a visual relationship between elements in the field. Therefore, positioning (or location of any one individual element) is irrelevant to the consistency of this field.

### Artificial

The individual lights, suspended in a room of fully reflective surfaces, reflect back and forth creating a field of points. There is no order to the collection, and no clear differentiation (other than scale) between one light and another. Despite this lack of order or composition, the field is comprised of individual elements that all share the same characteristics. Should one light be replaced with a television screen, the field would immediately have a singularity and a point of reference. Therefore, designing in this field allows for imprecision in placement, but a very prescriptive rule in content.

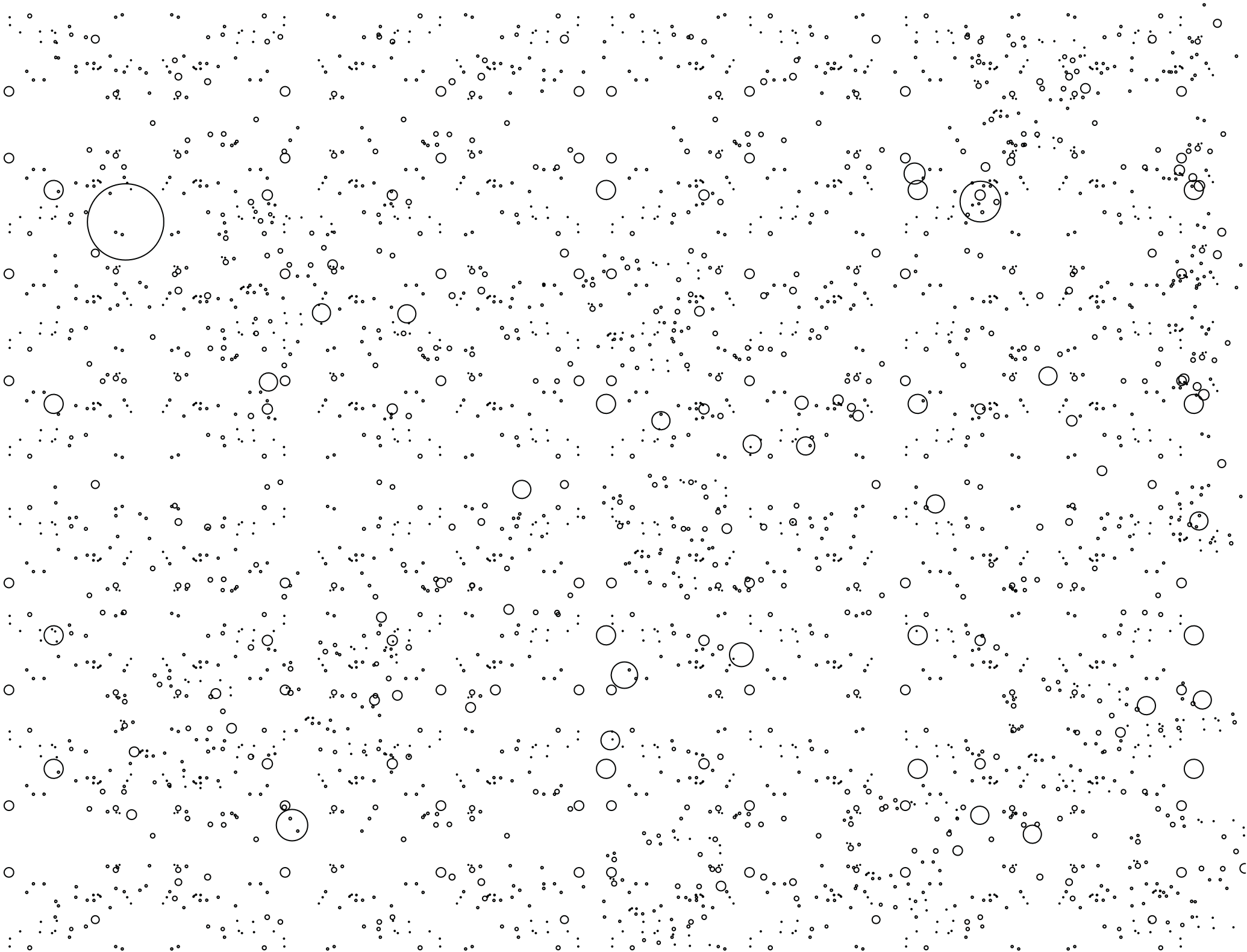


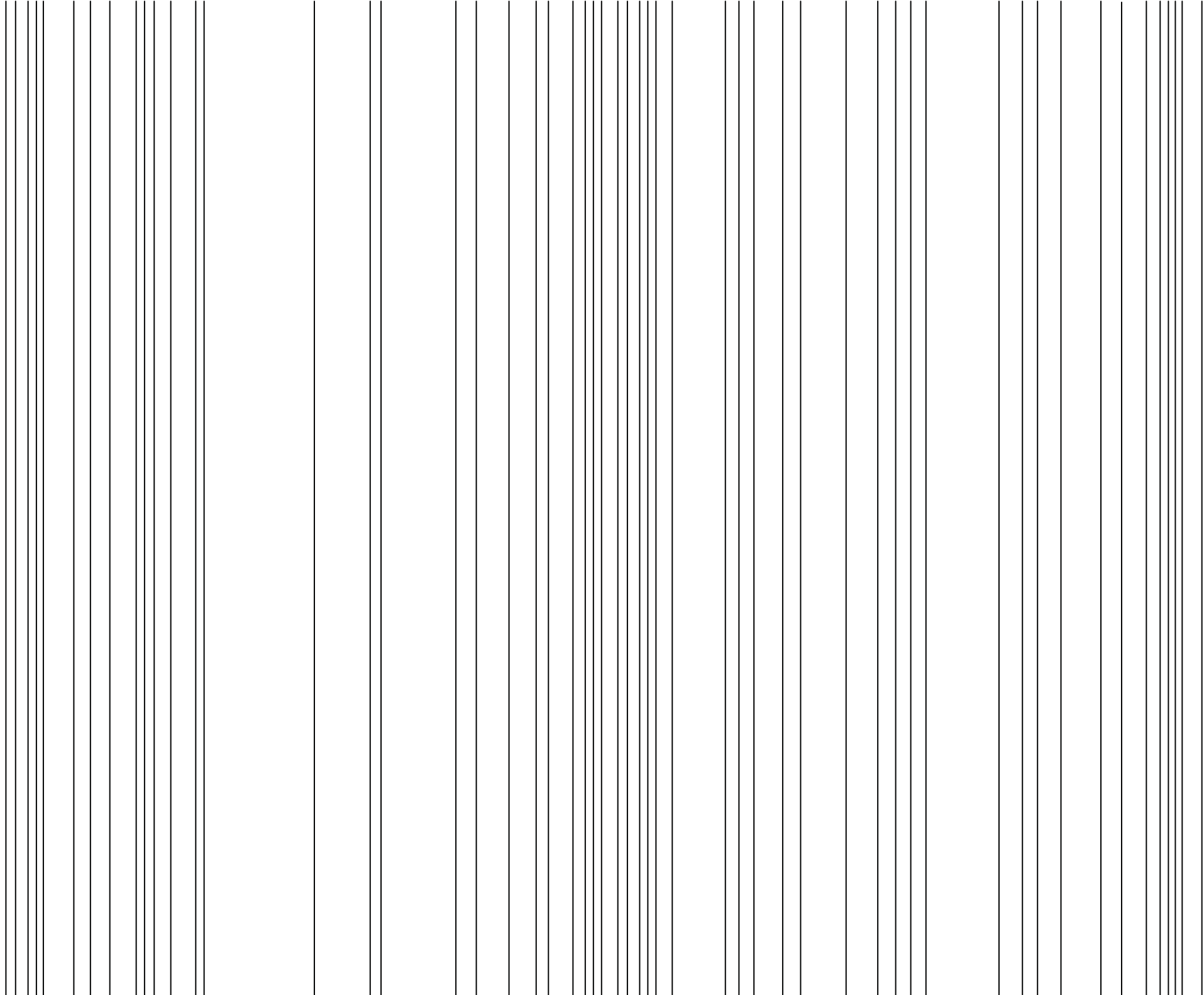




















## Rio De Janeiro

In the mass assemblage of buildings, the particular characteristics of site and topography become replaced with a new topography of architecture. In this condition, individual elements are no longer separate entities but blend into a collective fabric, which allows for individual pieces to be removed and replaced, removed and replaced again. Although any individual moment is actually a very personal condition, within the entirety of the assemblage, all becomes truly anonymous.

Horizontal



## "Architecture of Density #13b"

Michael Wolf

This produced image is the layering of several photographs of high-rise buildings, most of which are public housing projects. The effect of this technique is the disconcerting anonymity of the vertical. Despite the array of individual elements, but actually because of the array of individual elements, the facade becomes a pattern more than building. Unique features, such as planters or chairs or hanging clothes, all remain but their grain is too fine for the legibility of the entire field.

Vertical









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*“There’s no organization, no planning, just one shack next to another in an endless network of corridors”*

The horizontal expanse of similarly-scaled buildings creates an entirely new landscape. The original ground is neutralized by the architectural pattern, yet maintains a unique presence in the image as defining the edge of the field on the horizon.

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*"...focuses on repetition of pattern and form to cause an infinitely complex visual reaction...laced with evidence of human life - clothes lines, plants, mops and air conditioning units"*

- Azzarello, *Michael Wolf: Architecture of Density*

The vertical expanse of windows and balconies creates a vertical pattern that suggests building but does not articulate any particular logic or rational.







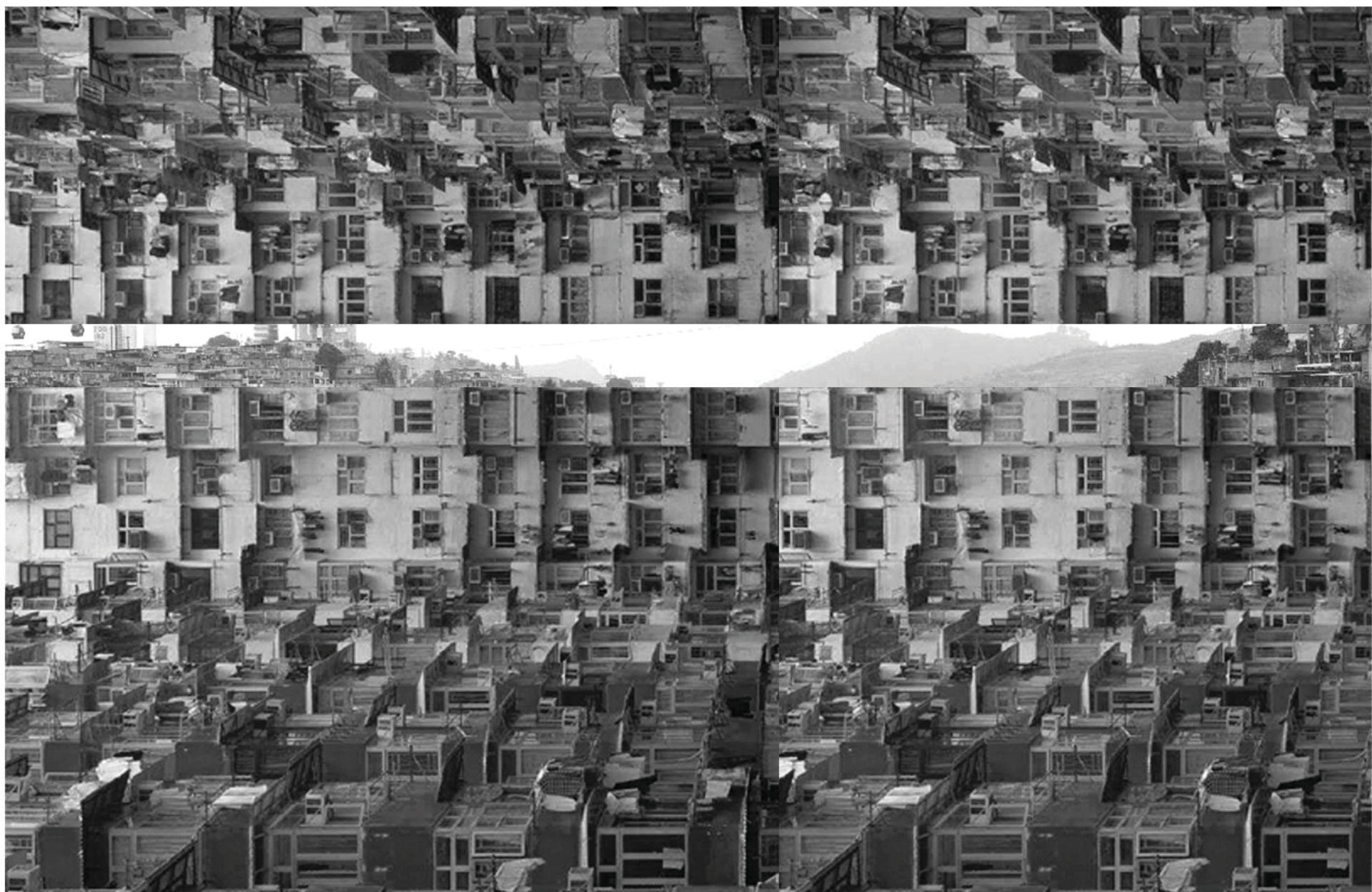
### Vertical Pattern

This field, comprised of horizontal strips, demonstrates the neutralizing effect of the field. The repetition of similar elements such as windows and balconies and awnings creates a new pattern. The significance of this field is that it can accommodate individual variations without compromising the collective neutrality. Therefore, the information imbedded in this field is layered and can be read at a variety of scales or levels of detail. However, in elevation, the field is comprised of elements that need to share the same height, but can vary in width without repercussion.

### Horizontal Pattern

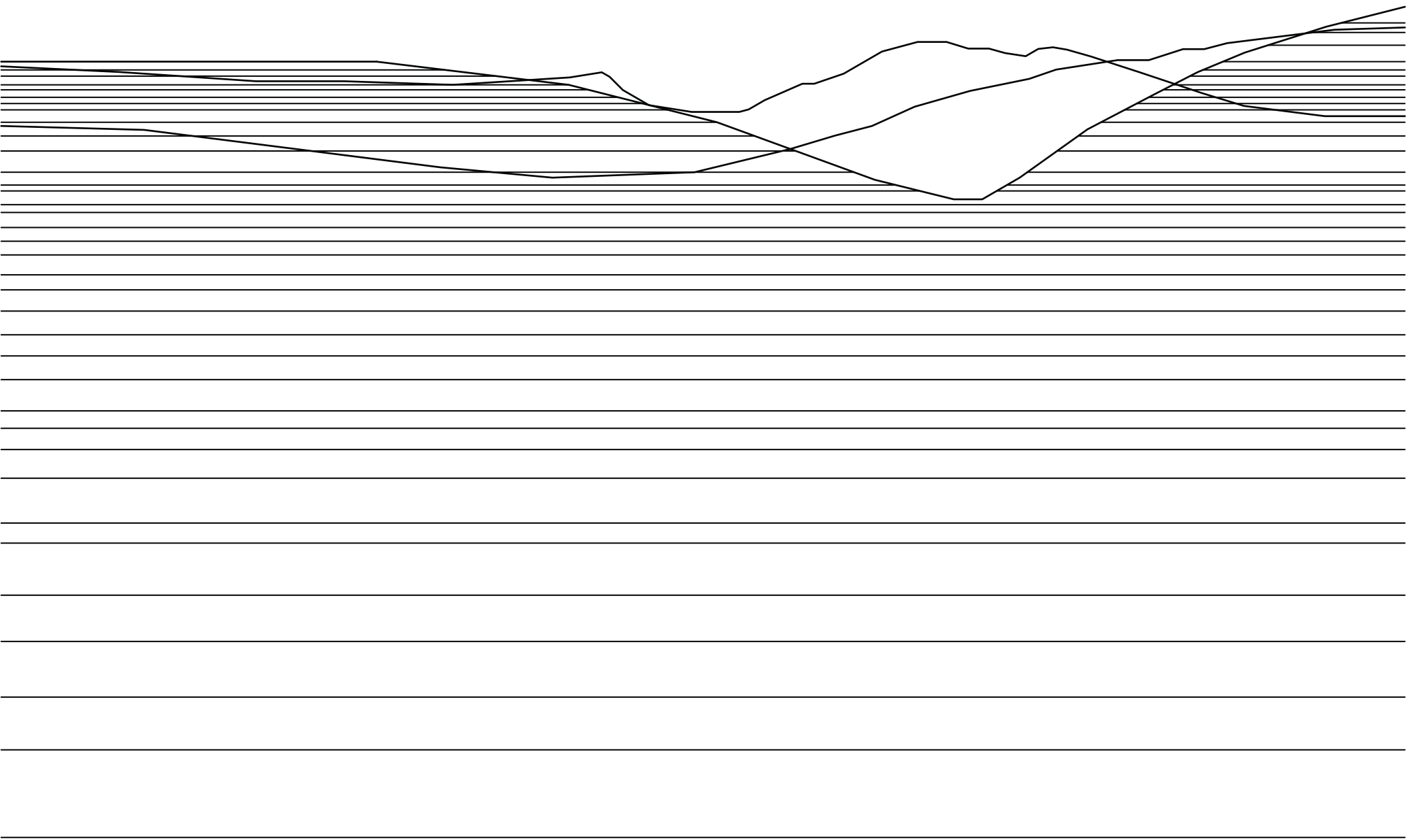
This horizontal field is made up of a seemingly infinite amount of varying objects. The sheer number of individual pieces in this fabric makes irrelevant any one moment. Pieces can be added, subtracted, and replaced and the overall composition is unchanged. To design in this field is to be anonymous and completely free, but only within the same scale. However this is only necessary in section, for the scale of any one particular object is not legible in this field.













[illegible]











## Fields of Distraction

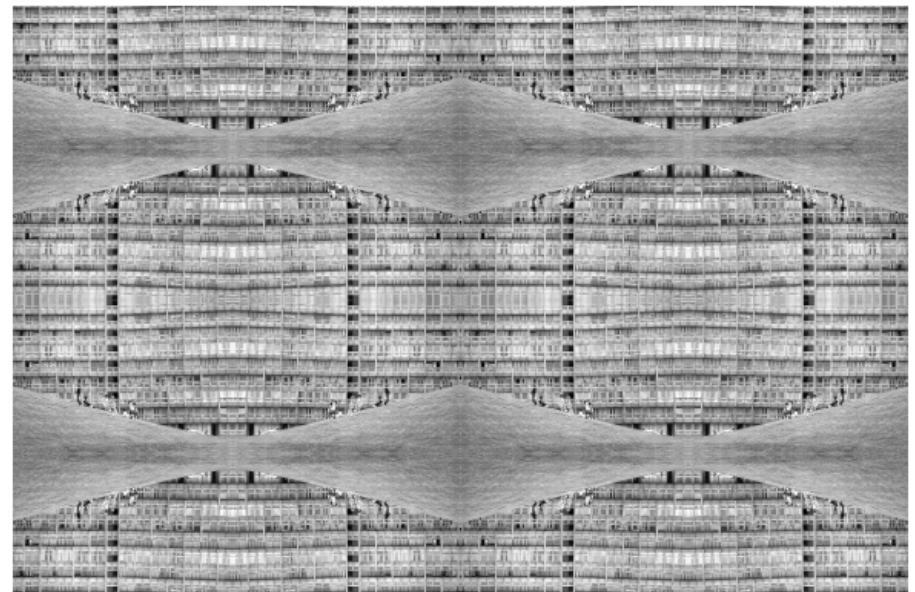
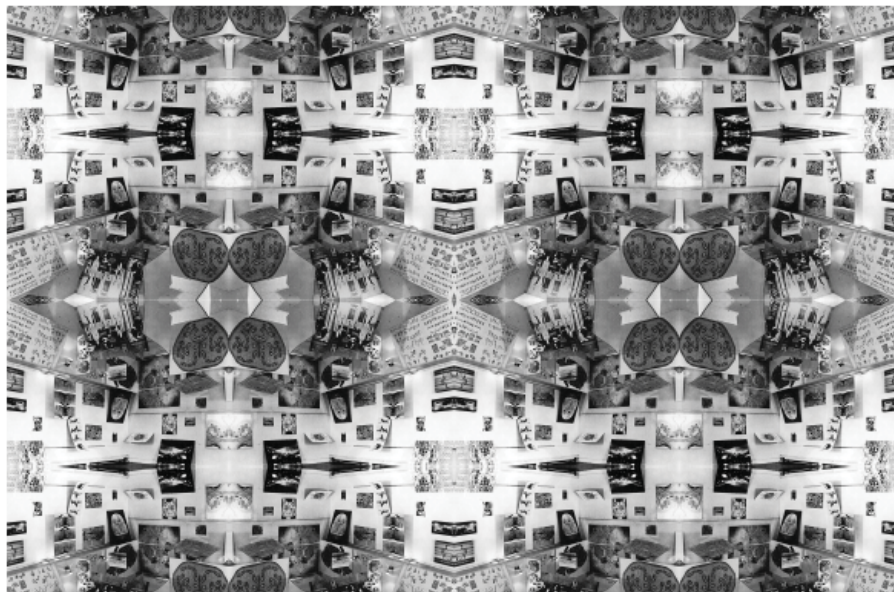
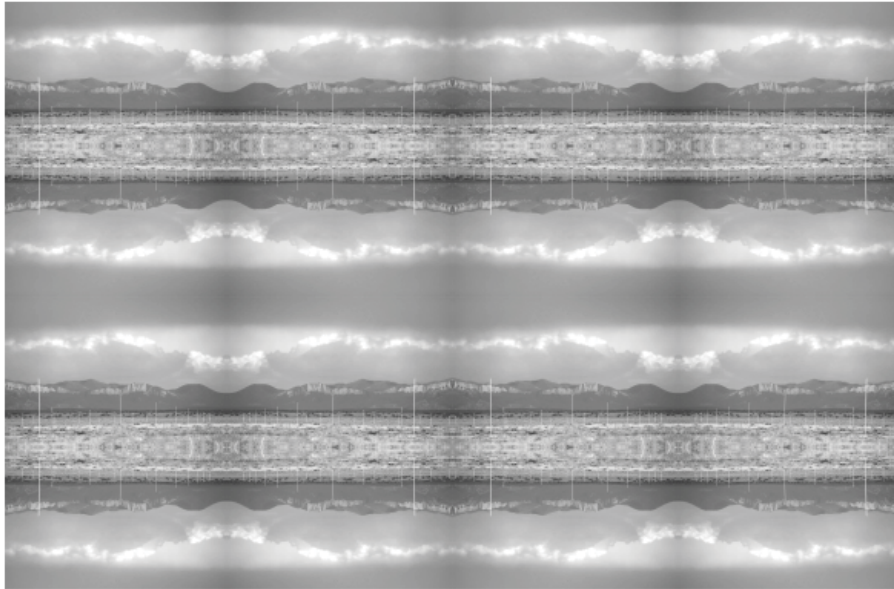
## From Object to Field



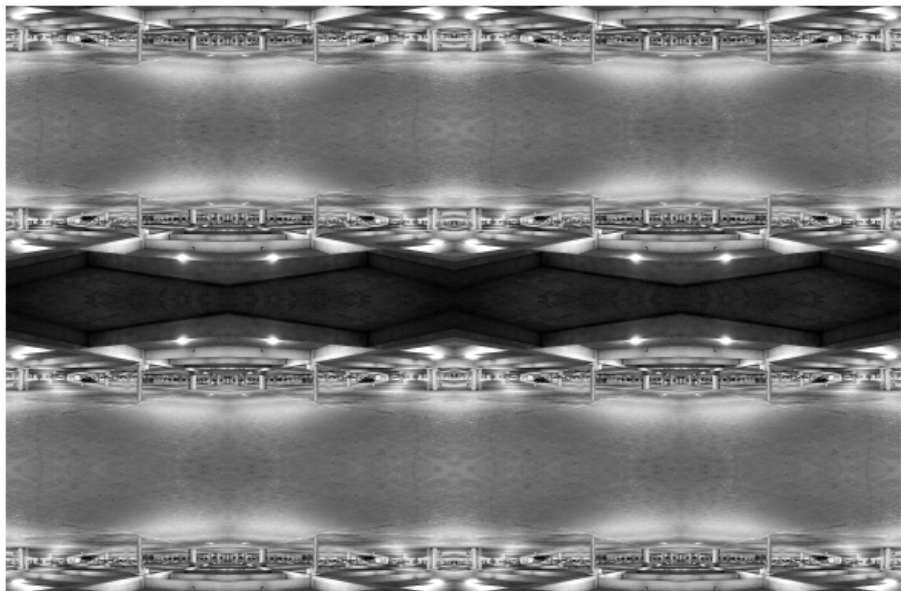
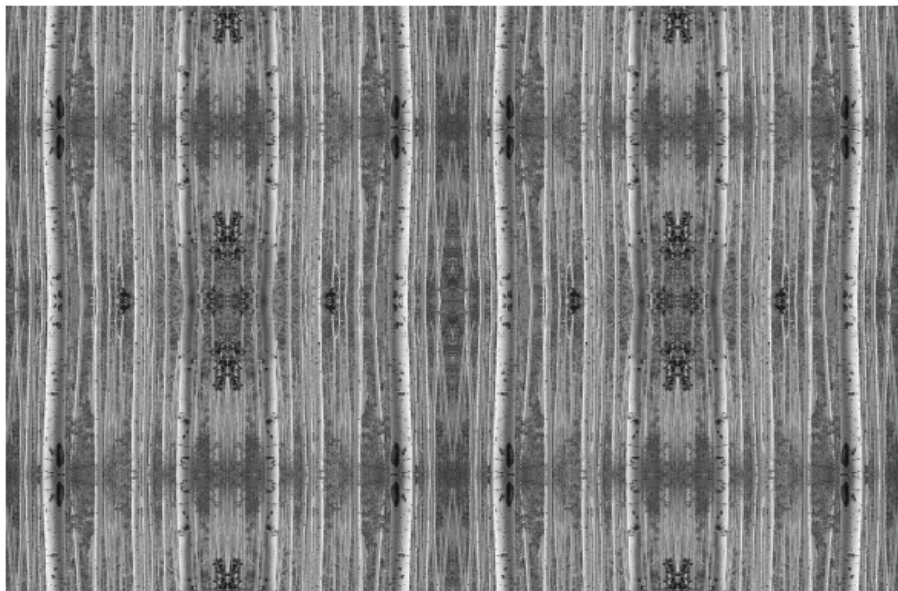
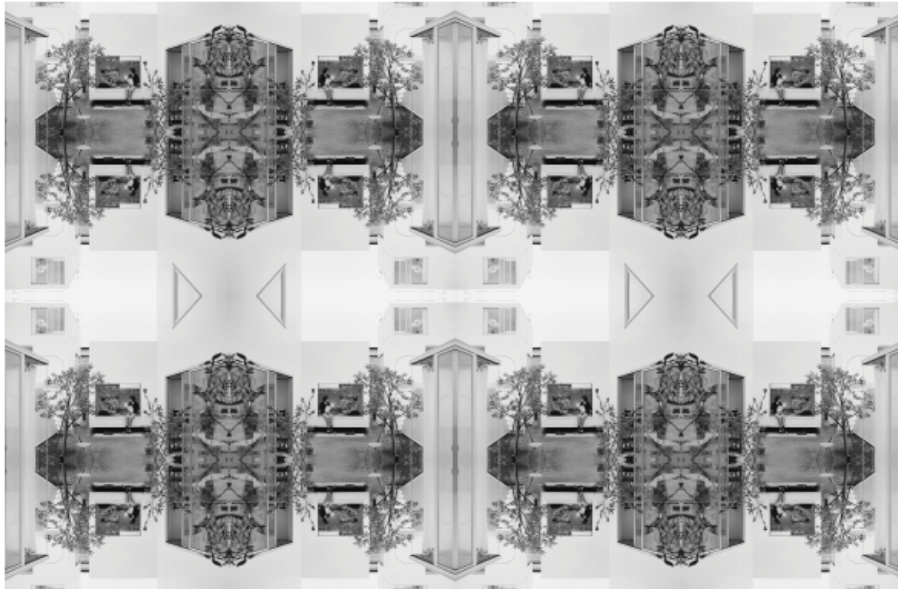




## Repetition Patterns

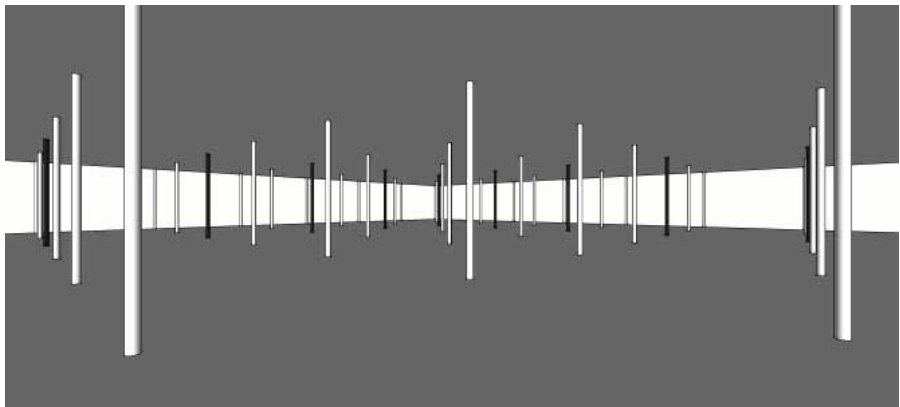
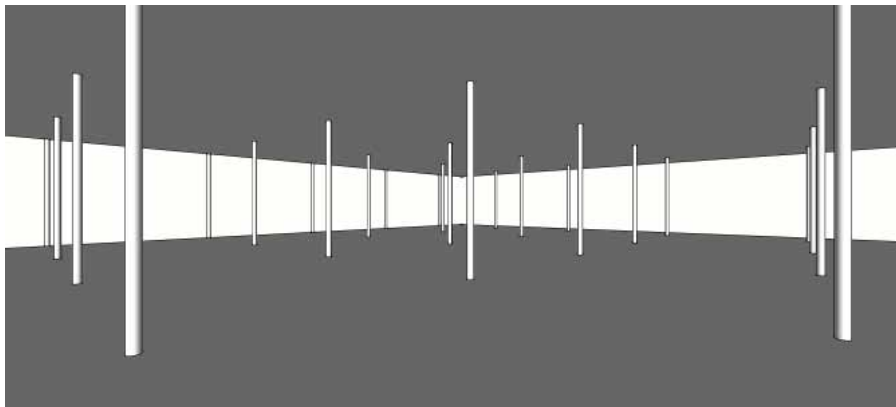
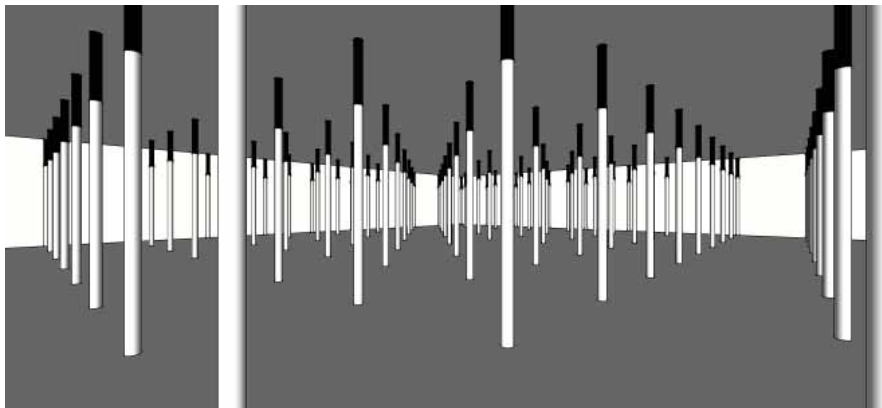
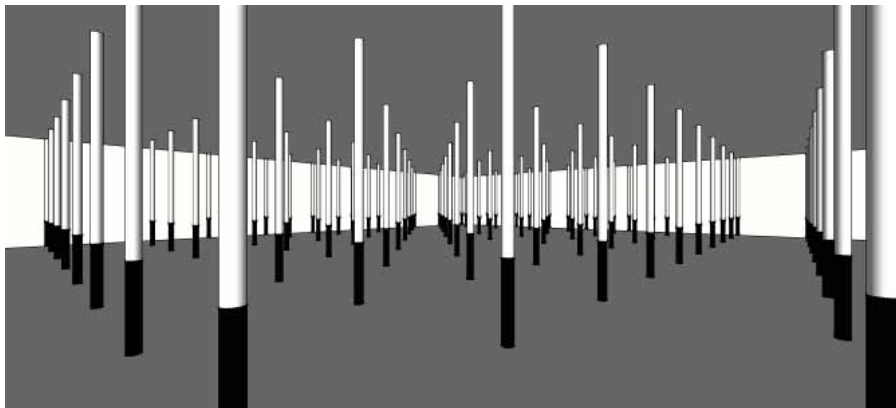
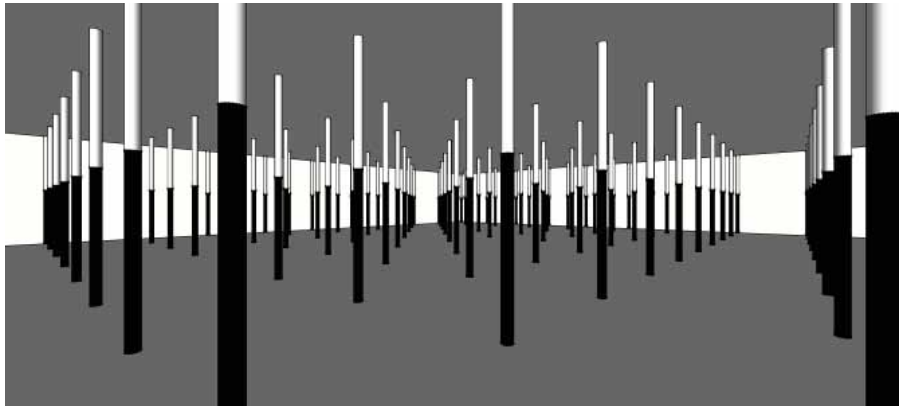
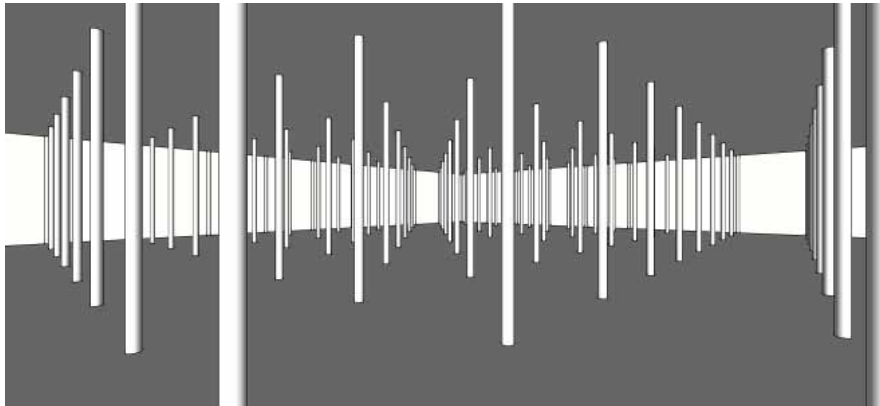


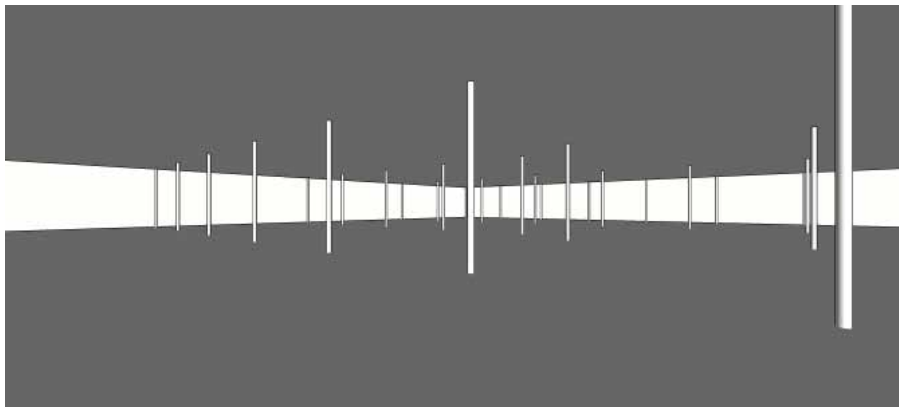
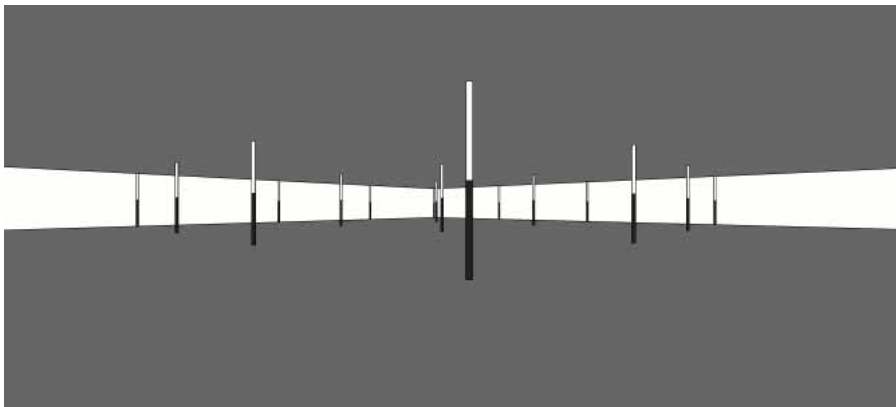
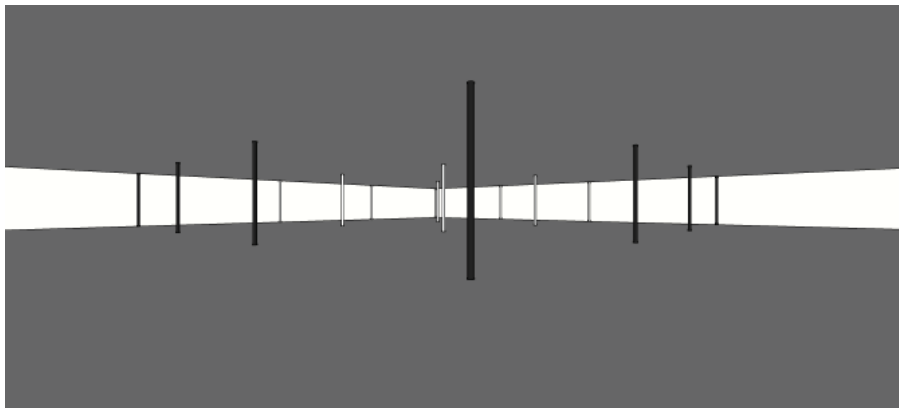
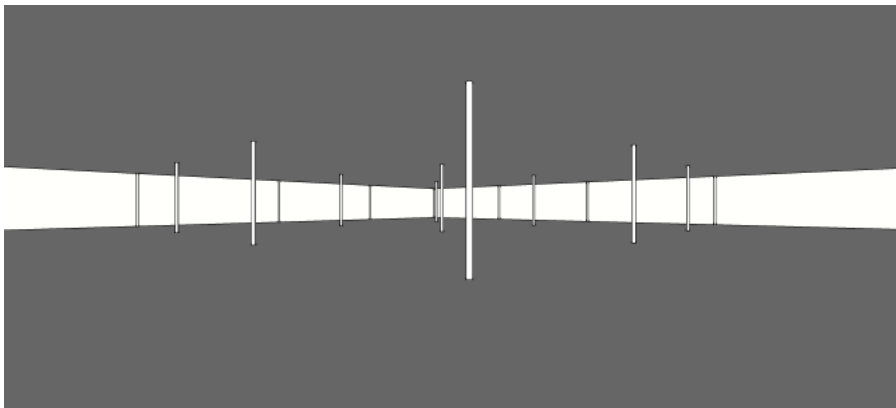
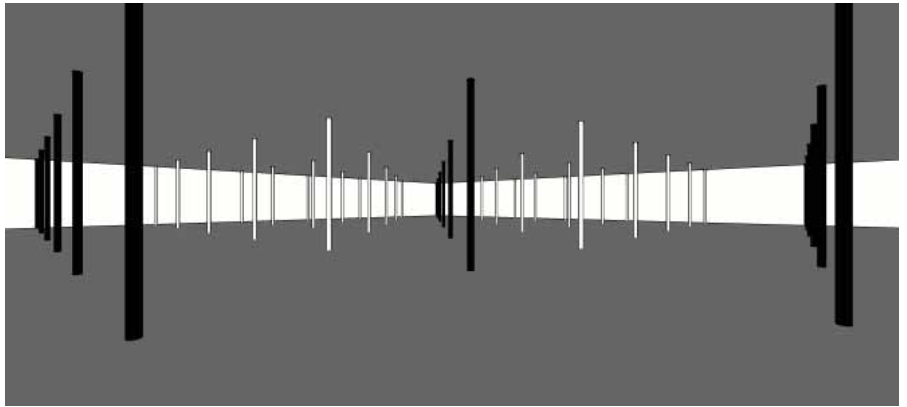
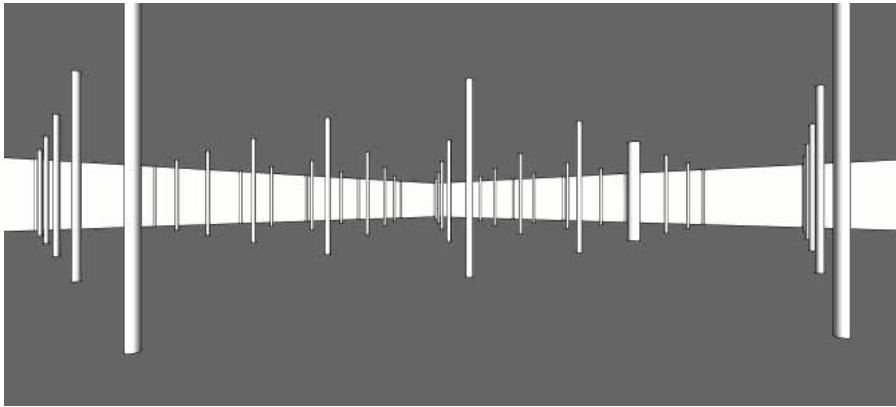






Column Field





## Lightning Field in Context







## Fields of Fields

This set of images is the closest to an entirely new condition; of fields within fields

